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THE LION'S WAY

A NOVEL OF DARK TRAILS

by C. T. STONEHAM

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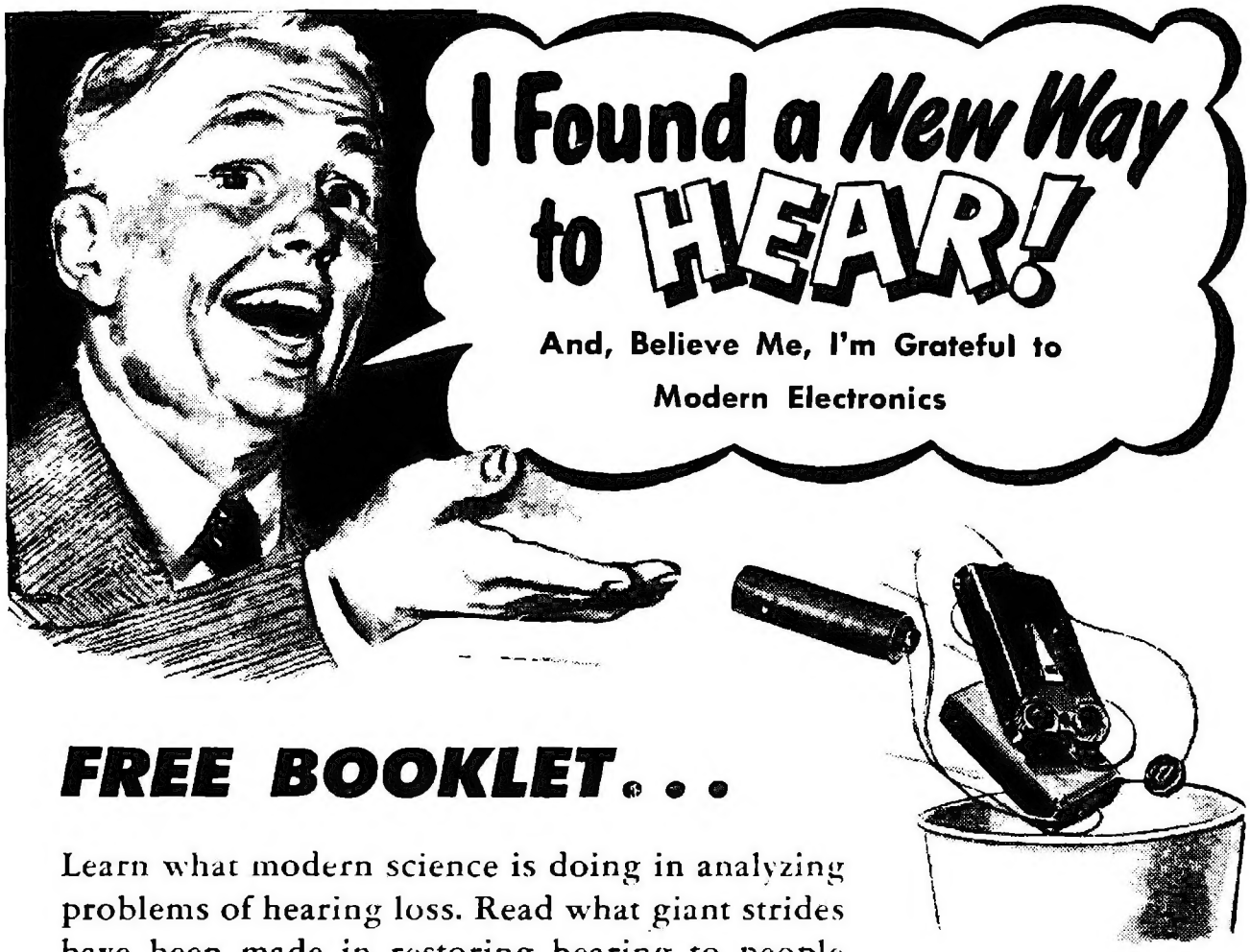

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VOL. 10 OCTOBER, 1948 No. 1

Book-Length Novel

The Lion's Way — **C. T. Stoneham** — **10**

Betrayed by Man, hunted by his kind, Kaspa of the Lions went for a last grim rendezvous with death—that the Law of the Jungle might live on!

Short Stories

The Women — **Ray Bradbury** — **104**

Had she heard the siren sea calling death to her doomed love? Surely not here on a modern beach but a soul-chilling warning told her he had heard it too.

The Human Angle — **William Tenn** — **112**

What greater folly than to seek out the human angle in a thing that belongs not to humanity?

That Low — **Theodore Sturgeon** — **118**

Grimly, alone, he fought his spectral battle—the man who could not die yet never quite succeeded in living.

The Readers' Viewpoint — **6**

In the Next Issue — **29**

The Lawrence Portfolio — **111**

Masters of Fantasy — **Neil Austin** — **117**

Edgar Rice Burroughs

Cover by Lawrence. Inside illustrations by Finlay, Lawrence and Clyne.

Published bi-monthly by All-Fiction Field, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary. Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter April 24, 1946, at the Post Office, at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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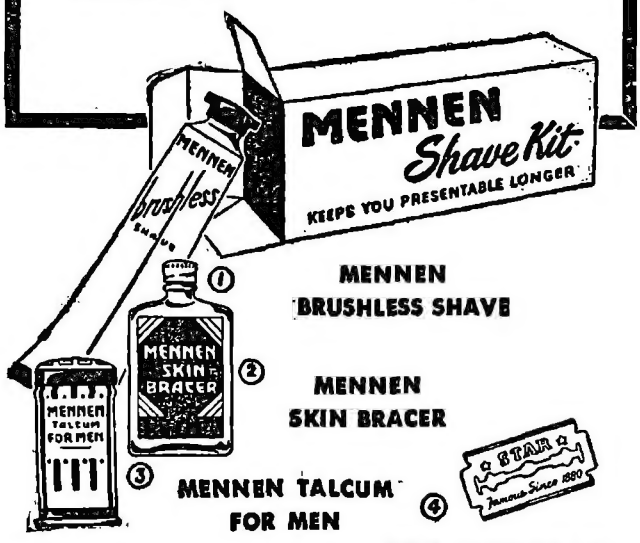

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The Readers' Viewpoint

Address comments to the Letter Editor, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, All-Fiction Field, Inc., 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, New York.

"DEVIL'S SPOON" GREAT!

Dear Editor:

I just finished "The Devil's Spoon." Great! Wonderful! The best story for a long time. This is an answer to Decil's request for humor, something I've wanted. An occasional light fantasy hits the spot.

If you want to print another, one that is about the best of the type I've ever read, try "Houseboat on the Styx," by J. K. Bangs. This is a ghost story only in that the characters are ghosts. The story is a rather short novel, but it would go well with some shorter fantasies.

Both short stories in the June issue were good— the idea of animals taking over is always intriguing. Are there any books with this theme?

The August issue evidently will be another one to crow about. I hope that, in time, we will get all of Taine's stories.

Thanks for the enjoyment you've given me.

WRAI BALLARD.

Blanchard, North Dakota.

CROUTCH AND McNUTT WELCOME!

Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! At last! A near perfect issue of F.F.M.! Yes, that's what I said, a near perfect issue.

The cover was an example of the good ole Finlay of days gone by. Colorful, but not too garish. Reminds me of some of the older F.F.M.s I have. I hope he keeps up like this!

The novel was a welcome change. It was, for once, an American story. I haven't anything against English authors (especially Dunsany, Hodgson, Haggard, Machen, etc.) but a strict diet of 'em gets tiresome. This was almost real fantasy. It even had honest-to-goodness fiends, djinns, sheytans (whatever they are) and a real Valkyr, too. A really enjoyable story that held my interest all the way through. The adventures, troubles and tribulations of Haroot were very human and I guess you can say this story has plenty of human interest in it. I won't dwell on this one any more. I'll just get to repeating myself.

"The Shadow and the Flash" puzzled me for quite a while. I did not have any idea of what

(Continued on page 8)

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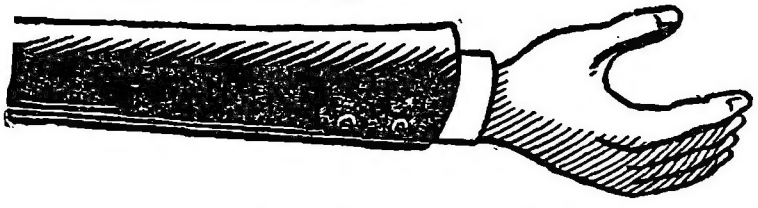

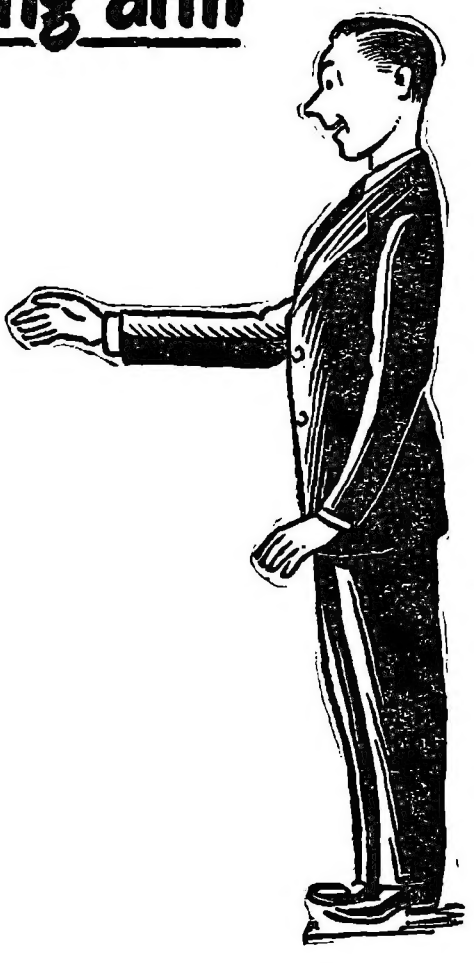

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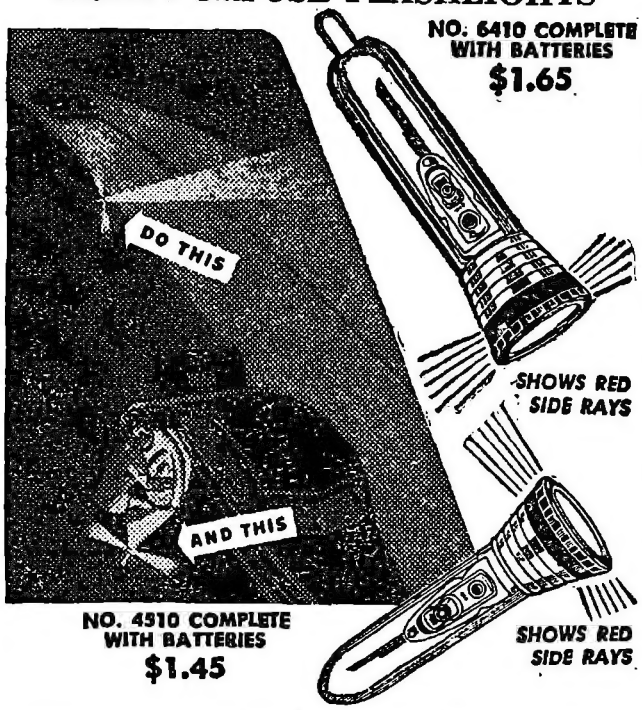

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FLASHLIGHTS AND BATTERIES

(Continued from page 6)

the title could mean until I'd almost finished the story. It was a very good one for its type and style. Only one thing bothering me about this story. Didn't they ever find the bodies of the two men? I can't seem to find any reference to the fact, if they did, or if they never did for that matter. I think that they would have found at least one of them. Remember what happened to the dog in the story, when it was killed. Unpleasant as the thought may be, I think that would have happened to the one who used that same process to make himself invisible. But no matter, I enjoyed the story just the same.

Les Croutch is the latest fan to break into the pros, and he couldn't have chosen a better mag to start in. The story is very good and is refreshing in a way. We've read many stories about the animal world turning on Man. But this is about the first one I've ever read that tells about *after* the animals conquered Man. Though, in this story, Man was his own undoing. Very good.

Lawrence's pics for the novel were, for the most part, up to par. He is giving Finlay a close run. I liked especially the spread on pages 8 and 9, the bordered one on page 61 and the picture on page 81. It seems like old times to see an illustration like the one on page 61. How about some more?

Finlay's illustration on page 103 is only average. But I liked McNutt's pic very much. How about some more of his? And some more of Clyne?

Masters of Fantasy was, as usaul, very well done. Not enough is told about the author's life, though. Why can't Austin do some regular illustrations, too?

Perhaps the best thing in the whole issue is the forecast for the John Taine story in the next! It is nice to see that you are finally giving us something we've been asking for. If it flops, we have ourselves to blame! How about some more by Dunsany, Chambers— "Slayer of Souls" by all means!—Hodgson, Merritt "The Fox Woman" and there are lots more. Thanks for many hours of reading pleasure.

Ed Cox.

4 Spring St.,
Lubec, Maine.

LONDON'S STORY SUPERB

I was very pleased with this ish of F.F.M. The novel proved interesting and different from your usual run of stories. Thank heaven it had a happy ending, for I despise the endings you have been having on the stories of late.

Finlay's cover was not what I have come to expect of our boy. It could have been much worse, though. But I am and always have been prejudiced against bright, flashing covers. I like 'em calm and serene.

I see that Lawrence did the illos for "The Devil's Spoon." Good. I like his art nearly as well as I do Finlay's.

Jack London's tale, "The Shadow and the Flash" was superb. I really enjoyed it. Any more like it?

The other short, "Eemanu Grows Up," was terrible. It should be placed in a children's magazine where it might be enjoyed. Children get à kick out of a talking animal story but I'm afraid as a story for adults—even us fans—it just flopped, and how! Please, Ed! no more like that one.

I greatly enjoy the one page articles on the great sf writers, and in time, I intend to collect them all and make a little portfolio for my own use. I think they could be bound and would make nice references that would come in handy to anyone who is just learning fandom and its many authors and famous books and stories.

Here I make a plea. I would like to get in touch with anyone in the Topeka area and surrounding states who is interested in forming a science-fiction club. There are several of us fans here in Topeka who are forming a club and we would like to contact more fans to come in with us. Is there anybody out there who is interested in joining us? If so, contact me.

Good luck to you and your future publications of F.F.M.

LINDA BOWLES.

931 N. Jackson,
Topeka, Kansas.

PLEA FROM ENGLAND

About three months ago I received a copy of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries,* the first I've ever seen. The story contained was called "The Peacemaker" by C. S. Forester. The magazine incidentally was dated Feb. 1948. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole issue. The cover by Finlay was extremely unusual and so was the story it illustrated.

I have since received two more issues dated April and June. The stories I haven't yet read, but the illustrations are equally as good as the first and my estimation is that Finlay is in a class of his own. If you would be so kind as to publish my letter I should like to know if there is anyone in the United States who has any spare Science Fiction or Weird magazines that they would care to send me. I regret I am unable to pay for them owing to the dollar difficulty, but perhaps I can repay them in another way; that is, if I have any success at all.

I will close now, hoping that F.F.M. will never change.

ERIC BAKER.

25 Frensham Rd., Southsea,
Hampshire, England.

ORCHIDS FOR AUTHORESS

I have seldom seen so good an issue as the last one of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries.* Good cover; fair shorts; but an excellent novel!

"The Devil's Spoon" is the best story you have printed since . . since . . . well, the *best!* Period. It had every engredient for a good story . . . fine plot, good vivid characterization, smooth interesting development, and also nice dialogue and description. It had everything.

(Continued on page 110)

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THE LION'S WAY

By

C. T. Stoneham

Betrayed by Man, hunted by his kind, Kaspa of the Lions went for a last grim rendezvous with death — that the Law of the Jungle might live on!

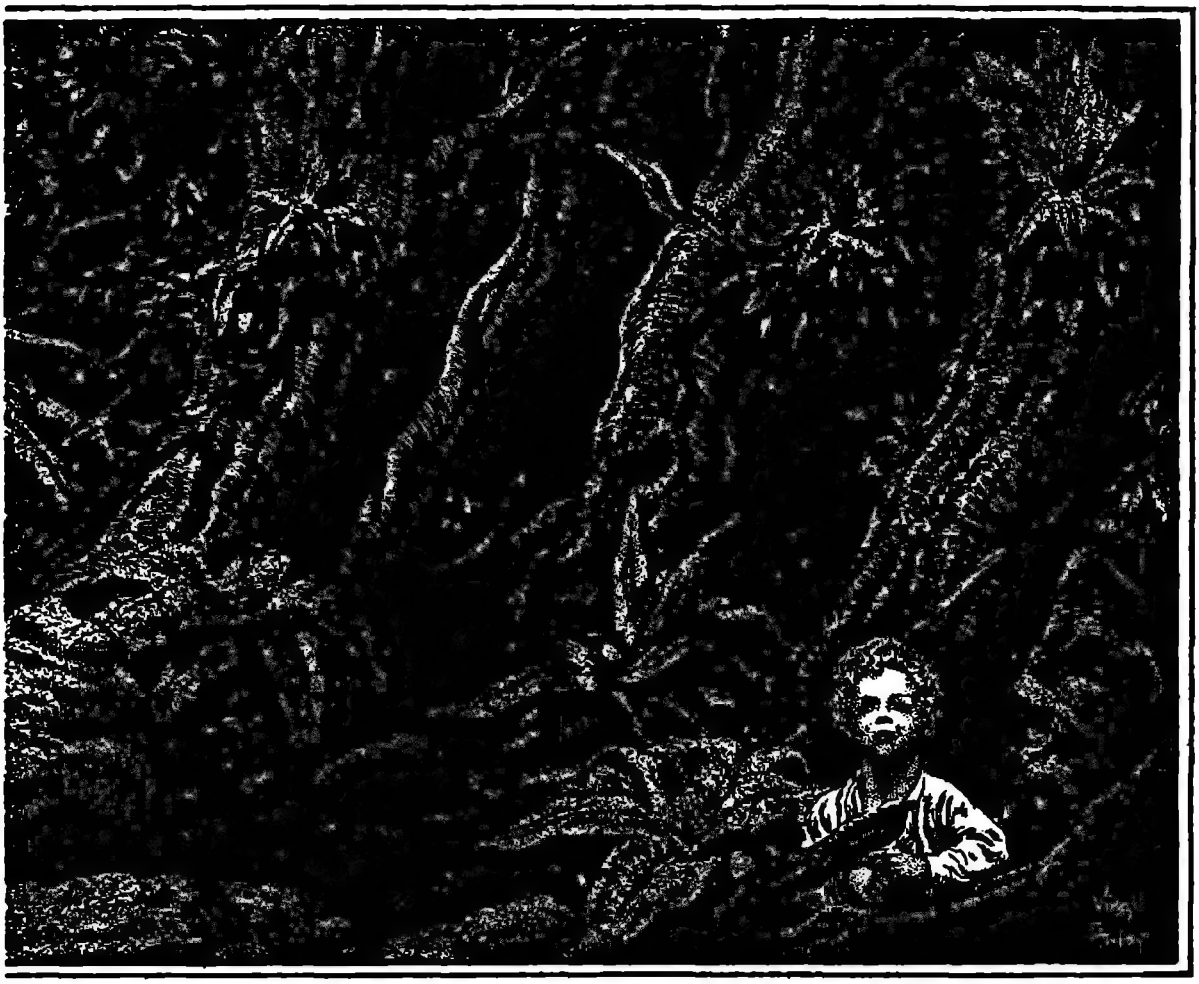
First North American Magazine Rights purchased from the author.

CHAPTER I

KALI'S CUB

AGAINST the purple background of the hills the moon rose red and immense. It illumined a vast rolling plain of bush-veld, broken here and there by long red seams of raw earth, the scars of watercourses made by the torrential rains of spring. In the welter of tangled, almost impenetrable thorn scrub were clearings of coarse yellow grass starred with white quartz boulders that reflected the ghostly moon's light.

Such buck as inhabited this wild region stood motionless and fearful in these clearings listening for a sound that was as familiar as the whistle of the night wind



The one small child stood looking at them from the shadows, his curly yellow head erect, his eyes unfearful. . . .

in the grasses at their feet, but which never failed to cause a shiver of apprehension to chase over their trembling bodies whenever they heard it.

As the moon rose clear of the clouds low on the horizon and turned the grass to silver and the shadows to pools of ink beneath the trees, that sound came floating through the cool air, remote and eerie, charged with awful melancholy, an aching savage note that held an undercurrent of menace.

"Oo-argh, oo-argh, oo-argh—argh—argh—argh-h-h!"

Deep, mournful, mellow as the note of a bell, and, like a bell, reverberating in the air long after the note had ceased, it rang and quivered about the clearings—the voice of doom, vibrant with all the savagery, the age-long mystery of the wild. The standing zebra shifted uneasily; here and there one snorted his alarm and indecision.

A herd of oryx on the edge of the bush began to move quietly away into cover. It was unlikely that they would be attacked, but they made a point of giving space to the killers. And in the midst of the glade, under a spreading acacia tree, stood a four-year-old man child listening to that awful music with throbbing ears.

At his feet lay the body of a half-eaten zebra, shaded by the dense acacia boughs from the sight of the ravenous birds that patrol the skies by day. It was the kill of those slouching demons that bade the veld tremble at their cry, and even now they were approaching to resume the feed that the morning sun had interrupted; but the child awaited their coming unafraid.

A pair of spotted hyenas circled the kill with questing noses. They would long since have been wrenching flesh from the carcass had they not feared the strange figure that stood guard, a figure by no means imposing, but redolent of the dangerous power of man. The lions came out of the jungle, traveling in single file at a leisurely pace.

Old Paka, a huge black-maned monster, led the way with slow and stately walk. Behind him Kali and Mua followed close, as became lionesses in the retinue of a chieftain as renowned as Paka. Nguvu, the last of the four, and mate of Mua, the young lioness, was a newcomer; he still walked warily in Paka's presence, and to-night he kept well in the background.

The four huge tawny beasts moved without sound into the full glare of the moon, and at sight of them the zebra vanished with wild snortings and a drumming of racing hoofs. Paka gave their retreating forms a contemptuous glance from his wise yellow eyes; he was not in need of meat that night. Kali moaned softly behind him. She was worried and miserable. Two days before she had possessed a pair of fine cubs, the progeny of her black-maned lord, but during her absence from the den some thief had entered, and when the lion family returned to their lair the cubs had vanished, and only the strong reek of hyena told of their fate. Such ferocity and daring on the part of the ghouls of the night had been unprecendented in the lioness's whole experience.

She had roved far and wide seeking her cubs, or at least the thieves upon whom she could wreak vengeance, but dismayed by the thought of the consequences of their rash act, the hyenas had traveled far and concealed their tracks with cunning. Kali, filled with wrath and sorrow, had sought vainly, and had at last returned to the den to spend the day in calling and moaning for her woolly cubs that would never again nuzzle her warm flanks and play with her in the sunlight of the cave mouth. The lioness was furious and distraught, a fearsome creature to encounter in her bereavement.

Paka, approaching the dense shadow of the acacia tree, stopped suddenly and growled. The wind had brought the scent of man to his delicate nostrils. The lion was not greatly afraid of man at night, but he recognized him as an enemy to be respected at all times. It would be folly to approach blindly in face of that warning. The lionesses and the yellow-mane spread out in line with him, striving to learn the extent of the danger and its imminence. And the one small man child stood looking at them from the shadows, his curly yellow head erect, his eyes unfearful. Kali stole forward; she was not in a mood to be held back from her kill to-night.

AS SHE reached the edge of the shadow the hyenas, maddened by the thought that their supper would be wrested from them by the lions, sprang in to gain at least a bite of the succulent fare before it was removed forever beyond their reach. One charging body struck the boy and threw him violently to the ground.

Kali saw those gray shapes, and at once the unreasoning fury in her mind found outlet. Here were the creatures that had stolen her young and left her desolate and hungry, with a mother love that ached to serve and succor but was denied an object for its worship. Like a released spring she shot forward, catching the unsuspecting hyena and hurling it, broken and dying, a dozen yards away.

She stood over the fallen child, snarling deep in her throat; and the child put up his small hands to her face and made soft ingratiating sounds. Kali did not recognize the manner of children talking to a cat, but the soft crooning voice and the clutching fingers in her coarse hair reminded her of other crooning voices and fumbling claws that had so lately been a part of her life. Instinctively she dropped her muzzle and licked the child's head with her rough tongue. A comforting purr sung in her throat, loud and harsh, but, to the child, full of the music of friendship.

"Pussy, pussy," he murmured, and laughed at the strange noise of the animal that stood over him. His questing fingers wandered along the lioness' side. The touch was natural to Kali; it awakened every mother instinct in her. She settled down upon the ground to nurse her new offspring, as contentedly as though he were fanged and clawed like herself.

The other lions approached suspiciously. Kali's purring told them she was occupied with her cubs, but no cubs could they see. Paka came forward and looked closely at the object lying between the lioness' paws. It was a small man creature, unmistakably; white in color, which was unusual, and with a golden mane such as he had never seen before.

But for the well-known scent he would have hesitated to believe it a man, but

there was no going against the evidence of one's nose, a much more perfect sense than that of vision. Kali was treating this man cub as though it were her own, but she must surely be aware that it belonged to the race of her enemies.

Females with cubs were always peculiar, but such peculiarity on his mate's part was beyond his understanding. He advanced nearer to examine this curious creature that babbled happily in the embrace of his savage consort and pulled at her furry ears with ungentle hands. Kali growled at him warningly. The old lion drew back in dignified fashion. He would not intrude upon her maternal affairs. If she was content, it was no concern of his.

He turned his attention to the carcass of the zebra, and, having grunted an invitation, made room at the feast for Mua and her mate. Mua walked wide of Kali; it was not etiquette to disturb her sister at her task of suckling the cub. And besides, Kali was her elder and superior in strength, and therefore to be dealt with gently. Nguvu, for his part, was eager to propitiate the big lioness.

He had recently joined the pack, taking the place of a lion who had suffered death at the horns of an infuriated buffalo a few months before. Mua had accepted his advances, but Paka and his mate had been more difficult to make friends with.

For many days he had been obliged to walk warily and to avoid anything in the nature of opposition to the pack leader, which would have resulted in his immediate expulsion from the family. He did not desire that, for he had been a lone lion long enough, continually at war with his kind over disputes about hunting-territory and females. He had been driven from the district where he was born by the enmity of the natives, who had made a special journey to a far-off white man's settlement to procure poison and traps to exterminate the lion pack of which Nguvu had been an inconspicuous member.

After a ruthless war of six months' duration, Nguvu had been the only one of his species left alive in that district. And, having recovered from a mild dose of strychnine, which had nearly ended his career, he had left that country in horror, and had ever since been searching for a family to whom he could attach himself.

Having at last found such a one, he had no wish to incur the enmity of its most forceful member and be cast out to wander again. He therefore studiously ignored Kali and her strange cub. If she chose to amuse herself with a man cub, it was no concern of his. He joined the others at the kill, and fell to assuaging his hunger, tearing off huge gobbets of meat and devouring them with leisurely scrunching that savored every mouthful to the full.

Kali lay playing with her cub. She had now definitely adopted the newcomer. Her own offspring were forgotten; she was content with an object on which to lavish the affection which at this season was a vital part of her.

WHILE the moon rose to the zenith and then climbed slowly down the sky, she lay purring and licking the child, offering it all the affection her bursting heart had accumulated during two days of distress when she had longed to find and comfort her missing cubs.

The child was a sturdy youngster. He was attired in nothing but a strong khaki shirt, an imitation of the hunting shirts worn in that part of the world. His bare feet were innocent of bruises and scratches, showing that he had not walked far in the bush, and his golden curls were ordered as though he had recently left the hands of his nurse. Evidently of a fearless nature, he had not reached the age when the terror of wild beasts had been communicated to him by his elders.

To the thoughtless confidence of childhood had been added the self-assurance of generations of protected and civilized forebears, whose primitive fear of the animals had been eradicated by the immunity conferred upon them in their sheltered lives.

He had no fear of the lions, especially Kali. To him she was a large and friendly dog, obviously well disposed and tractable. He liked her soft warm fur, against which he could shelter from the chill of midnight, and the purring of her was a friendly, comforting sound, taking the place of the lullaby with which his nurse had sung him to sleep on many occasions. Tired and contented, the child fell asleep. Kali disentangled herself from his embrace and rose to take her turn at the kill.

Paka had kept one haunch untouched for her, and now he stood aside to make room for her enjoyment. While she ripped and tore at the tough meat, he turned a questing nose to the child asleep in the grass. Kali looked around and growled in her throat. Paka hastened to show that the affair had no interest for him. He walked round to the other side of the kill, and lay down with ostentatious indifference.

An hour before the dawn the lions roused themselves to depart. The kill was no more than a heap of gnawed bones to which fragments of flesh and hide clung, and they abandoned it to the hyenas without regret. Tomorrow a new kill would have to be procured, and this might occasion some trouble, for it was not easy to surprise and capture an animal whose every faculty was directed to the avoidance of death from the tawny terrors of the night.

But the lions did not waste a thought upon this. At present they were full fed; the morrow could take care of itself. Kali licked her cub with her rough tongue. The child awoke, stretched his little arms, still half in dreams, murmured "Mummy". Kali took him by the back of his shirt with careful jaws and carried him away into the thorns on the trail of her companions. Henceforth he was her property.

As the first gray light of dawn flecked the eastern sky the lions came down through a thick grove of acacia trees to a broad slow river. Here they drank their fill, while all other creatures departed in haste from the dangerous proximity of such dreadful neighbors.

His thirst slaked, Paka raised his head and sent his enormous voice ringing and echoing out over the veld, a song in which his three companions presently joined.

"Paka, the black-mane, and his people have had good hunting and are now going to their daytime lair," said that chorus, and after a minute, from faint and far off came an answer.

"Leo of the missing claw, has gone hungry, but to-morrow he will kill." A mile down the river a magnificent solitary tawny-mane sought his bed among the rocks, hoping for a fat zebra when the friendly night should come again. Paka led the way back from the river to a small kopje, among the rocks and thorns of which only a low-standing beast could penetrate.

At the top of the kopje was a large cone of lava, and at the base of this a sandy cave sloped down to a warm, sheltered chamber, secluded and dim. Kali carried her cub to the back of the cave and deposited him upon a bed of white sand. She settled down near by, to blink at the bright light beginning to enter at the cave mouth, whilst the other three lions disposed themselves about the cave, Paka occupying a flat table-shaped rock near the entrance. So Kaspa spent his first night with the lions.

In after years men remembered that marvel and wondered how the child felt, surrounded by those ferocious animals, his life hanging upon the moods and whims of a fickle-minded beast of prey. But in truth Kaspa enjoyed himself as a child of that age can.

He was of that race of super beings who have no fear of Nature and Nature's children.

About midday he awoke, hungry and thirsty.

He announced his desires now in the decided manner of one who has been denied nothing that human power and forethought could supply.

Kali opened her eyes at him and made a soft crooning noise, the mother call to a distressful cub. The child crawled over to her and snuggled into her warm embrace, burying his face in her soft fur. Half asleep he groped with questing mouth, in the most natural of all motions, and presently warm milk was assuaging his thirst. He snuggled and drank like a young puppy, and Kali's deep purr resounded through the cave, a song of love and consolation.

AS THE days went by the other lions became accustomed to Kaspa's presence among them. The man smell still persisted, but it was overlaid with familiar odors from constant contact with the lioness; and certainly there was nothing of man in the cub's deportment. He went fearlessly among them, playing and rolling and grunting, not only with Kali, but on occasion with Mua and Nguvu, and sometimes in thoughtless presumption, with Paka himself.

The old lion was unapproachable at first. When, half asleep, he lay on his rock, and Kaspa, attracted like any kitten by his tufted tail, crawled over to play with it, he would growl a warning and lift his black lip in a menacing snarl. That was invariably followed by a snarl from Kali, which sometimes became a violent spitting and roaring that abashed the old fellow, causing him to turn his eyes away uneasily under the well-merited rebuke.

For a long time he could not bring himself to accept the man cub as his offspring, but Kali was so insistent, and so quick to resent his warnings to the presumptuous youngster, that gradually he became more and more tolerant. And one day Kaspa mounted his mighty back unrebuked and rolled over him, as no true lion cub had ever dared to do.

From that time complete confidence was established. Paka looked upon the cub as under his protection and entitled to every right of a member of the brotherhood, a unit who would one day take his place in the pack as a useful addition to its strength. There was now no fear that he would inflict injury on the cub from sheer dislike, and Kali was content and no longer interfered when the leader undertook the correction of her protégé.

That period of tuition was a hard one for Kaspa. At first Kali had held aloof from the nightly forays of the pack. She dared not leave her cub alone in the cave, and, embarrassed by his presence, it was impossible to hunt. She contented herself with remaining on guard at such times when hunting was toward, and going abroad in company with her charge only when a kill had been made and hidden at some nearby point, ready for her attention.

Paka was, of course, sedulous for her welfare. There were a number of duiker and other small buck in the bush along the river, and he devoted the early morning hours after the strict business of the night had been attended to, to hunting the small animals, and when successful bringing them to the cave for his mate and her cub.

The periodical onslaughts upon the zebra and kongoni herds were carried out by himself with Mua and Nguvu, but as soon as a kill had been obtained and his hunger satisfied he would hasten back to the vicinity of the den to pit his wits against those of the little bush antelope and provide a supper for his mate.

Kaspa learned to eat raw buck meat, and to drink the muddy water of the river. In a few weeks he rarely availed himself of Kali's milk to quench his thirst, and learned to eat largely when there was plenty, in preparation for the days of abstinence when no meat was procurable.

In the vivid moonlight he played among the rocks and bushes outside the cave, while Kali lay watching, keeping a jealous eye upon his doings.

So the days went by with little to distinguish them from each other in their monotonous similarity. The grass was long, game plentiful, and hunting easy, so that there was abundance of food for the lion family. About a month after Kaspa's introduction into the circle Mua gave birth to a couple of male cubs, and now there were two lionesses tending their young in the cave, and the task of supplying the meat fell exclusively upon the lions.

Nguvu began to bring home large animals and drop them in the bush near the cave, close handy for his mate. Paka did not like this. It drew attention to the situation of the lair, and although he had never put into conscious thought his disinclination to litter the surrounding bush with the bleached skeletons of the larger buck, he felt that it was a practice to avoid.

Luckily this was a district where, at the time, no natives lived to discover their place of refuge, but the abundance of offal, which the lions discarded as unsuited to their discriminating tastes, attracted large numbers of jackals and hyenas, who began to lair in close proximity to this well-provided spot. At night the bush rang with the rallying cry of the ghouls of the night, and before long the lions had hundreds of attendants at their nocturnal feasts.

As always happens when the cowardly scavengers of the wilderness gather in overpowering number, they began to presume upon their hosts' magnanimity. Now, as the lions appeased their nightly hunger, they were badgered and insulted by hoards of laughing snarling fiends, who caused an uproar sufficient to tell any one within a mile or more that a feast was in progress.

Paka became worried. He was watchful and alert at his meals, surly and perturbed during his daytime rest. The old lion was a hunter of long experience, and he knew the danger of advertising his presence and habits so widely.

Before long his apprehensions were justified. One day Kaspa, now a sturdy brown-skinned youngster, whose nocturnal habits did not interfere with sundry daytime excursions into the nearby brush, was playing upon the kopje within a stone's throw of the cave. The boy had spent the hours from dawn to midday in sleep, and now he was eager for the warmth of the afternoon sun and the sights and sounds of the busy daylight world. This propensity for roving abroad in daytime had been a source of considerable anxiety to Kali, who knew the danger of the glaring bush for the creatures of the night. But Kaspa had an irresistible urge to be up and about while his companions were content to lie sleepily awaiting the coming of night, and the lioness had gradually become accustomed to this peculiarity in her cub.

Kaspa was climbing among the rocks, a pastime strange to any lion cub. He looked down over the top of a sheer escarpment on to a grove of trees near the river,

where a half-eaten carcass of a fat kongoni had been carefully hidden.

Suddenly strange jabbering sounds assailed his ear.

Four creatures were gathered about the kill, conversing in loud voices. To Kaspa they looked something like the baboons he had often seen scrambling among the rocks of the kopje, but he knew instinctively that these were no harmless monkeys. There was something about the careless arrogance of their bearing and the curious erect posture which they maintained, apparently without effort, that terrified him. They carried sticks of curious shape in their hands, and their skins hung loosely about their brown bodies in peculiar fashion. Kaspa stole away to the cave and Kali, growling low in his throat and casting uneasy glances behind him.

Paka was immediately alert. He went to the cave mouth and stood there snuffing the air continually, but after a time, when no danger manifested itself, he returned to his rock and stretched his mighty form upon it, to lie for the rest of the day with his yellow eyes fixed upon the curtain of daylight that shut him off from the outer world.

Kali quietened her cub with a few consoling licks, and fell asleep again. She felt no alarm as long as Paka remained content. Wandering enemies sometimes passed the cave, but there were few who would deliberately provoke the anger of the lions.

THAT night, when Paka led the way down to the kill, the bush reeked of the scent of man.

The old lion circled the tree beneath which the kongoni lay, trying by ear and nose to find the cause of that malignant odor. The hyenas were already at work, and, judging by the numbers hurrying to the feast, there would soon be nothing left for the rightful owners.

Disregarding all caution, Nguvu made straight for the kill. It was no longer lying on the ground, but had been raised and suspended from the tree out of reach of the baffled hyenas. Nguvu stood looking at it, making no attempt to approach and pull it down, as he could easily have done. Mua was not so patient. She had left her cubs for a few moments while she came down to snatch a few hasty mouthfuls, and she had no time to waste with all these hyenas about and the cave left unguarded.

Disregarding her mate's warning growl, she reared up against the tree and took the meat in her mouth. Immediately there was a sharp snap, and something appeared to detach itself from the green trunk and leap at Mua's leg.

The lioness flung herself backwards roaring and struggling, but she was suspended in mid-air without any chance of employing her enormous strength against the thing that held her. Nguvu sprang to her help, tearing at the steel trap with teeth and claws, but the metal was proof against his efforts. Paka and Kali leaped back into the shadow, staring affrighted at the struggle by the tree, Kaspa crouching silent and terrified against his protector's flank.

After a few minutes Mua hung motionless, her hind legs supporting her weight, her fore paws braced against the tree in the manner in which she had been caught. Her lips writhed back from her teeth in a soundless snarl. She was over the first paroxysm of pain and fear, and beginning to get savage and fighting mad. She looked round eagerly for the enmy who had wrought this evil, for she knew that the thing that held her was inanimate and unable to feel her onslaughts.

Nguvu crouched beside her, growling softly. He had seen this thing happen before, and he knew that the next act of the tragedy would be the arrival of the hunters and the brutal murder of his helpless mate. He also knew the uselessness of resistance. He had seen two maned lions killed while attempting to protect their mates held helpless in these devilish contrivances.

In the morning the enemy would come to the number of fifty or more. Firing off guns, yelling and beating tins and drums, they would surround the tree, and when Mua's companions charged them they would take to the trees like monkeys and shoot them to death from the safety of their roosts, far out of reach of a spring.

In futile wrath Nguvu chased the hyenas right and left, striving to vent his fury upon something of flesh and blood instead of the cold iron that mocked him. The ghouls fled screaming and laughing, to gather again next moment in grim expectation of their meal.

For hours the lion family prowled round the spot where one of their number was held captive. Mua struggled fiercely from time to time, but for the most part she was silent and watchful. Her mate communicated to her by that process of

thought transference—assisted by certain well-understood sounds—by which the animals converse that her fate was inevitable. It was beyond his power to extricate her; only the terrible man creatures who had set the trap could release it.

Listening to his explanatory grunts, and sensing the thoughts unspoken, Paka also began to have some idea of what might be expected. As the night wore on and dawn began to make its appearance in the sky, he grew uneasy, and when finally Nguvu drew away towards the cave, the older lion for once abandoned his leadership and followed the younger beast. Upon that same sheer rock from which Kaspa had seen the first approach of the hunters they took their stand and waited for what might come.

When the sun was high above the hills and the brush was almost free of shadows, a long procession of dark-skinned men came along the river bank. They were all armed with spears and shields, and some of them had guns of antiquated pattern. They kept up a continual chanting in time to their march, and as they approached the tree and saw their prize fierce shouts of pleasure broke from them.

In a half-circle they came forward, the warriors in front, weapons in readiness, the drummers a few paces behind the main body, eagerly waving their sticks. Within fifty yards of the still form of Mua, at a signal from one of them, the drummers struck their instruments. An appalling uproar began, in which the raucous screams of the warriors contended with the thunder of the drums and the howling of kudu horns.

The three lions and the boy watching from the rock shrank in horror from the brutal cacophony, so disturbing to the sensitive ears of the cat people. It affrighted Mua also. She began to roar and struggle, and at this demonstration of her might several of the less courageous natives climbed trees to safety, fearful that she might loosen her foot from the trap. Others ran forward and at a range of a few yards opened a confused and ill-directed fire with rifles and bows.

Bullets struck Mua, causing her to roar and writhe with pain and rage. Spearmen ran in, and soon there were a dozen quivering blades protruding from the lioness's jerking body. In a few minutes it was over. Mua hung inert from the tree that had betrayed her, her splendid tawny hide streaked with blood.

The natives gathered in a howling, dancing ring about her, shutting out that awful spectacle from her comrades' sight.

The lions had observed these happenings with horrified interest. Paka watched intently, without a sound. Nguvu kept up a low growling in his throat, his twitching muscles evidencing his desire to dash upon the hunters' spears in a futile effort to avert his mate's fate. Kali jerked and snarled as though pulling at an invisible leash, while her man cub crouched whimpering against her, a prey to all the fears that were communicated from her mind to his.

Kaspa never forgot that sight or the lesson it taught him. Henceforth he was to know that the most terrible enemies of his kind were the man folk, who slew from a distance and made cunning snares to render their prey helpless before they attacked it. A fear and hatred of lions was in the make-up of men, and that fear and hatred were reciprocated.

In after years Kaspa remembered Mua's death and the manner in which it was brought about. He had discovered that the lions were not all-powerful as he had supposed, for there was one enemy who by cunning and the use of strange instruments was enabled to kill Mua before her comrades' eyes without their daring to avenge her.

Paka suddenly rose from the rock and moved slowly away towards the cave. Their refuge was bare and empty; no mewing cubs greeted their return, but the place reeked of hyenas, at which Kali raised the hair on her shoulders and thrust close against her man cub's side. Mua's cubs had perished while she was held captive, and the hyenas were the murderers. Paka looked about the cave as though taking a long farewell of the home in which he had found many days of peaceful security, then he turned and led the way across the kopje and down its opposite slope into the dense thorn bush. Testing the wind, he swung around to the west and headed towards the distant mountains.

CHAPTER II

THE KNIFE

THE new den was sixty miles away on the upper reaches of the Noyoka River. Clothed in juniper forest, the stream came tumbling out of a range of bleak mountains on to a wide sloping

plains bare of tree and bush. It was a high, healthy country of cold nights and joyous frosty dawns. Before the midday heat oppressed the veld thousands of buck and zebra grazed on sweet grasses or dawdled along the river-bank where a few bright green fever-thorns gave shade.

This pleasant country, usually inhabited by the Bomogo, a pastoral tribe of nomads, was at this season of the year abandoned by human beings. The Bomogo disliked the cold of the dry-weather nights, and had driven their flocks and herds down into the thorns.

Paka had an old lair in the bank of a donga half a mile from the forest line. It was a fair-sized cave, scooped out by flood water, but it was not as luxurious a home as the kopje cave on the lowlands.

It was here that Kaspa, being now nearly six years old, began to learn something of hunting and the customs of his adopted people. The child was unusually tall and well developed for his years, so much so that he would have been accepted as double his age in any civilized community. He was quite naked, his fair skin tanned to a clear even brown, his bright golden hair forming a cap of curly thickness for the protection of his head.

In a land where, at five years of age, the native child is herding cattle with all the assurance of a grown man, the lion-boy had developed self-reliance beyond the common. He was fleet and agile, strong and hardy as a lion cub; for did not the lion's milk run in his veins, and the lion's meat nourish him?

His senses of hearing and sight had been abnormally developed by constant use and natural aptitude, but his scent, though as much keener than that of an ordinary man as to be marvelous, was yet inferior to those of any of the wild creatures. He made up for this by increased intelligence —the attribute of the stock from which he sprang—and by his hands, which were instruments of utility beyond the envy or understanding of his companions.

Those hands were of the greatest benefit to the lions. They could remove a rankling thorn or a burrowing tick with the greatest ease, or roll a rock aside from the cave floor; and above all they enabled their possessor to climb trees. Kaspa was led to discover this ability by observing the ways of monkeys. He could not but notice the similarity of his limbs to those of the tree-dwellers, and to imitate their playful activities among the branches was natural to a boy.

With his human propensity for roaming about in broad daylight when the lions were resting he had ample opportunity to practice climbing. He soon became agile and fearless in the branches. The forest was full of creatures whose habits he studied with the greatest interest. Elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, all became well known to him; and since these animals have little fear of the lion, and Kaspa had the smell and tactics of the lion, he was allowed a familiarity that man could never have enjoyed.

His education went forward apace. Kali had almost ceased to bother with him now, though she retained the affection that all intelligent creatures have for their offspring at no matter what age. Kaspa was considered to be old enough to fend for himself. He was definitely accepted into the pack to hunt and fight with it and share provender. Both Paka and Nguvu took a hand in instructing the new recruit.

He was taught all the methods of hunting, what beasts to avoid as dangerous quarry, and what to attack without scruple, trusting to his dreaded reputation to disarm all resistance but that of panic. Among the animals there was only one that could afford to ignore the power of the lion, and that was the elephant.

Rhinoceros and buffalo were seldom troubled at the proximity of the carnivora, for they knew that they could be overcome only with danger and difficulty, and the purpose of the hunters was food, not sport. But there were times when shortage of meat obliged the lions to attack even those powerful animals, and it was therefore not friendship but an armed truce that existed between them.

The oryx was another animal that was seldom sought after. Equipped with long rapier-like horns and the courage to use them, these oxlike creatures frequently gave as much as they received in a battle.

The zebra was the lion's favorite meat, and the kongoni was also much esteemed. There were various methods of hunting these animals. A solitary lion would lie up at a favorite drinking-place to wait for the beasts to come down to water. A quick rush at the unsuspecting quarry would often result in a kill. But the zebra was wary of approaching such places, and long experience had taught them to observe every caution while drinking.

THE easiest method of hunting was by the drive. This was the reason why the lions banded together in families.

Many hands made light work in procuring their sustenance.

The drive was usually conducted by the lions as beaters, and the lionesses and cubs as the actual killers.

Having located a herd of game, Paka would post his mate and Kaspa down-wind in the best cover available.

The old lion and Nguvu would then make the circuit of the herd, uttering their melancholy hunting roars, which, by an effect of ventriloquism, appeared to come from all points of the compass. The terrified zebra would gather in a bunch, uncertain which way to run, and reluctant to make any effort at escape until they knew the exact position of their enemies. The lions, stealing nearer and nearer, would allow their scent to be borne by the wind to their quarry.

Immediately the zebra would run a short way down-wind and pause again, awaiting the attack they knew would come. This maneuver would bring them closer to the waiting lionesses. When the time was ripe the lions stopped roaring and, silent as ghosts, stole upon their prey. A sudden lightning-like rush would stampede the herd, the individuals of which would rush blindly in every direction to escape the oncoming terrors. It was bad luck if one of them did not pass near enough to Kali to afford her an opportunity of catching it. The lion can charge at a speed of fifty miles an hour over about fifty yards, and when the lioness launched her lithe body at a bewildered zebra, not more than ten yards distant, it had no chance of avoiding her.

She had three ways of killing. Usually she reared up against the zebra's shoulder, throwing her immense weight upon its withers and biting through the spine with one crunch of her great jaws. If the beast was coming straight towards her she took it by the throat and pulled it down with such force as to make it turn a complete somersault.

With creatures having thick neck-muscles, difficult to bite through, such as the wildebeest, she threw her weight upon the withers and reached a long arm round the neck until her claws caught in the animal's jaws. The head was then drawn sideways and finally backwards until the neck cracked.

It was astonishing how quickly and skillfully the killing was done; there was no mauling or useless expenditure of strength.

Kaspa at this time was unable to kill any of the larger creatures. He employed the tactics of his tutors with success; he could charge out at a running zebra with such unexpected speed that it could not escape him, but, having laid hands upon it, he had insufficient strength to hold it. Sometimes small gazelle were mixed up with the zebra herd, and then he would concentrate his attention upon one of these and, if he caught it, could break its neck by the leverage of its horns.

These expeditions were not always conducted with success. There were nights when the lions were defeated by the cunning of the quarry, or by some oversight of their own. Furthermore, the attackers did not always escape scathless. To arrest the violent progress of a heavy beast is not easy, even for a lion, and Kali generally came to ground with her prey in a tangled, kicking heap, from which she extricated herself bruised and scratched.

Neither did Kaspa escape his share of the injuries attendant upon these undertakings. In many encounters he was cut and beaten, and on one occasion sustained a couple of broken fingers that gave him severe trouble before they healed.

In this way he learned the astonishing hardihood of the wild creatures which enables them to fight or run with unimpaired agility even when seriously wounded.

He appeared to thrive upon a diet of raw meat, but in common with the lions he frequently ate vegetable matter. They would chew grass or the bark of young trees, but Kaspa found out the tastiness of wild spinach and consumed large quantities of it. He was also addicted to berries and such fruits as he saw the monkeys eat and therefore was induced to sample. For even at his early age the boy's mind had developed far beyond that of an animal, and he was aware that he was not a true carnivore.

In shape he was not unlike the natives he had seen murdering Mua, but he was convinced that he was not of their tribe; his skin was whiter and his hair of different texture and color. Neither was he a monkey, for those creatures could not walk erect with ease as he did, nor had they his squat face and broad features, which he had seen reflected in still pools as he drank.

He came to the conclusion that he was a kind of ape born of a lion, but he wasted small time in speculating upon his origin. There were a hundred other uses for his active mind, connected with the important matters of chase and veld craft, in which he was never tired of experimenting. Dur-

ing these years of development he was seldom in contact with man.

Paka, warned by Mua's fate, gave the Bomogo a wide berth. As soon as the natives vacated the thorn country and returned to the high veld the lions went back to their old lair in the kopje, and with the advent of the cold nights that drove the natives to lower levels Paka led his people up to the hills.

AFTER sundry mishaps with her litters, Kali reenforced the pack with the addition of two fine male cubs, the progeny of Paka. They were called Dogo and Ruka, and were both black-manes like their father.

These two were Kaspa's brothers and constant companions. He had played with them as cubs, and bore the scars of their teeth and claws upon his body, for the playing of lion cubs is not gentle. He had taken a hand in their education and had shown them many of the tricks of the hunting game. With them he practiced feats of strength and endurance, and by their unconscious aid he discovered those methods of combating the strength of the lion which was in later years to save his life on more than one occasion.

For Kaspa quickly discovered that he was no match for a lion in sheer strength. His playmates rolled him over with the greatest ease, and, did he come to grips with them, could have killed him at once. It became apparent that if he were to win a place in their regard he must hold his own with them. He set his wits to work to find some way of combating their strength and weight.

He discovered that his best chance lay in his agility.

Quick and springy as a cat, he could leap and dodge and run in a manner most puzzling to his four-footed playmates.

Furthermore, he could climb, and once let him gain the shelter of a tree and they could do nothing with him.

He would leap down upon them from the branches, kick and cuff them, and be aloft again before they could retaliate. But, despite his superior agility, it seemed he would never be able to conquer a lion; his equipment was too meager.

He could dodge a rush, parry a stroke, place himself in a position to inflict damage, but when he had done so the damage was beyond his power to inflict. His teeth were negligible as weapons, and his claws were futile. By contact with the ground—for he often walked about the caves on all fours—his nails had become worn down and blunted; they could make no impression upon furry hides.

Remained his hands, deadly weapons against most things with his enormous strength to back them, but of little use against teeth and claws. At times he would roll one of his brothers on to his back and try to throttle him. The lion would wrench loose his grip and throw him off without trouble. He found it easier to parry the paw-strokes with which they buffeted him in these games, and to retaliate with straight punches, sufficiently severe to cripple a man, but of little effect upon the bony heads and massive bodies of his antagonists.

Kaspa gave it up in despair and contented himself with the knowledge that, although he could not oppose his companions with force, he could always escape from them if there were a tree handy, or if he could gain a few yards' start from that deadly rush and wear them down by long-distance methods.

The lion is not a good runner, and will seldom continue a chase once his first speed and energy is exhausted. Kaspa could run away, but this was not very satisfactory, for to live amongst savage companions and be unable to compel respect is a dangerous existence, as he recognized, but he could find no way of improving matters. His fears were justified by the events of the summer which found him sixteen years of age.

Paka was, by this time, a very old lion. His muzzle was gray, his teeth loose in his head, and his sight failing. He did little hunting these days, and but for the activities of his pack would almost certainly have starved to death, or been driven to man-killing. He still tried to assist in the capture of game, but he had become so slow and uncertain that his efforts were more harmful than useful.

One night when a kongoni had been hunted almost into the jaws of Kali it turned at the last minute and tried to break back through the drive. It made straight in Paka's direction, and the old lion unhesitatingly launched himself at its throat. But his fading eyes were not keen enough, his motions too slow. He missed his hold on the throat, and the beast, with lowered horns, charged straight into his chest, knocking him out of the way and making its escape to the open veld.

Paka struggled to his feet and roared his rage and disappointment. He did not seem to be hurt at the time, but after they

had returned to the cave, hungry and tired, Kaspa was surprised to notice that Paka made no attempt to leap on to his flat-topped rock, but lay down in the sand beside it.

As usual, Kaspa roused himself in the afternoon and set about his rambles along the riverbank, rambles in which the lions had no share. When he reentered the cave at dusk it was to find Kali standing over the prostrate body of her mate, sniffing at him in a frightened way. Kaspa sat down to watch. It was strange that Paka did not awake, and he began to understand that the old lion was not as usual. In a few minutes Kali communicated to him the intelligence that the leader was dead.

The lions did not roar that night when they left the cave; there was no leader to begin the chorus. They traveled far afield before they managed to kill a zebra in a clearing in the thorns. And when they had fed full, and daylight was near, they did not head back to the cave, but with unanimous decision trekked away up the river to a new hunting-grounds. Near a tumble of boulders, in lower country than they had yet traversed, the dawn caught them, and, since no lion will expose himself in strange country by daylight, they lay up in this poor shelter.

AT DUSK they were abroad again, and Ruka almost immediately struck down a fear-blinded impalla doe that crossed his path. He set paws on the carcass, and raised his voice in the roar of triumph that announces a kill. The doe was dragged into a suitable position beneath a tree, the belly opened and entrails removed, and the lion family gathered to the feast. But scarcely had Ruka torn his first mouthful from the haunch than a low grunting was heard close at hand and every head was lifted expectantly to watch a newcomer emerge from the bush.

He was an enormous tawny-mane in the prime of his strength. He paused in the moonlit clearing and grunted an enquiry. The answering grunts were doubtful, and not inviting, but the big male came forward with the confidence of one who is on his own hunting-ground and strong enough to resist infringement of his rights. He was entitled to figure as a guest at this meal, and it would take more than an old warrior and two young ones to stop him.

Kaspa he ignored, summing him up as

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some sort of a freak creature—a hybrid ape, perhaps. Kali snarled at him as he came forward, and he walked wide of her, as became a male when a lady insulted him. But this detour brought him within a few feet of Nguvu, who, unwilling to be ousted by this handsome fellow, snarled also. Quick as a flash, Bulu turned and attacked the old lion with fang and claw. Nguvu, half-surprised, was overwhelmed. He rolled over and over, roaring terribly, striving to keep the tawny-mane's teeth from his throat, but suffering severe gashes on neck and foreleg.

With thrusting hind feet he managed to throw Bulu clear, but before he could regain his feet the big lion was back at him, ripping and tearing and snarling like a demon. Nguvu was knocked about like a helpless cub. He was dazed from a succession of blows upon the sides of his head, and the other gave him no time to regain his wits.

In a moment he was in full retreat into the bush, with Bulu after him. Kaspa watched all this, astonished. It was the first fight, other than the petty differences of half-grown cubs, that he had seen. He wondered whether they should interfere on Nguvu's behalf, but before he could make up his mind on this point Bulu returned and stalked up to the kill as though he owned it. This was too much for Ruka's self-control. It was his kill, and Bulu was an uninvited guest.

Ruka marched forward snarling, and immediately was overtaken by the same fate as Nguvu. So rapid and irresistible were the big lion's attacks, that the unfortunate Ruka, though a well-grown and powerful youngster, was given no opportunity to prove his prowess. He crouched down, growling defiance, but plainly showing that he had no desire to dispute the ownership of the kill with so dangerous an opponent.

In a lordly manner Bulu began to eat. Kali came up for her share, and beyond a sideways glance at her he ignored her presence. But the instant either Dogo or Ruka attempted to follow her example a warning growl made them retreat.

Kaspa and his brothers sat watching the new leader eating his fill, and when at last he was satisfied he moved a little way apart and lay down as though making the others free of his leavings. Ruka and Dogo went forward, but when Kaspa joined them Bulu rose and without warning made a rush at him.

The boy, warned by the experiences of Nguvu and Ruka, had never taken his eyes off the big lion, and he was not caught napping. With a sudden effort he leaped five feet off the ground and caught a bough above his head, pulling himself up until he was well out of reach. He sat there snarling at the attacker and wishing he had the strength to descend and fight it out with him. Bulu lay down again, but at every movement of the boy in the tree he growled and looked warlike.

Kaspa got no food that night. He sat up in the branches watching the others feed under the savage eye of the big tawny-mane. Ruka and Dogo were depressed and nervous. All their lives they had been subjected to the leadership of Paka, and now they did not know what attitude to take towards the confident interloper. Kali, obedient to the law that governed her kind, conducted herself as though nothing untoward had happened. It was in the best interests of the lion family that their leader should be a redoubtable fighter and a forceful character. Bulu was both.

It seemed to her that they could not do better than obey him, and wax fat under his dominance. Ruka and Dogo would fall into line, of course. The habit of subservience to an older lion was implanted in them. They were not yet old and experienced enough to take independent action. Nguvu must fend for himself. He had challanged Bulu's supremacy and had lacked determination to gain his point. Kali obeyed the instinct of her kind. But Kaspa was not so amendable.

He understood that while Bulu ruled the lion pack there was no place in it for him, and the idea of joining with strangers and living a solitary life was frightening.

He resented the intrusion of the big lion into their circle, and, unlike the young lions, had no wish to let that resentment cool. He had all the pertinacity and determination of man. As long as he lived Bulu would be his enemy and he would direct all his energies to overcoming him.

He watched the dawn break over the line of dark trees, and in silence suffered his companions to depart to seek their daytime lair. When they had vanished from the glade and the waiting hyenas had gathered to the remains of the kill, he slipped down the tree and took the trail of Nguvu.

He found the old lion lying in a donga about a mile away. It being the tail-end of the rains, the donga had water in it, and Nguvu had drunk there. The old fellow

The child put up his small hands to her face and made soft ingratiating sounds. . . .

was terribly mauled and had lost a good deal of blood. Kaspa sat down by him and conveyed to him his sympathy. Nguvu did not reply. He was feeling sore and savage; his pride had been hurt even more than his body.

Kaspa understood that he would lie up near the water for at least three days to recover somewhat from his injuries. After that he intended to live solitary. He had not had a mate since Mua's death, and he did not want one. Doubtless there was plenty of meat to be had by a single lion, and certainly when a kill had been made it would last longer.

He did not ask Kaspa to share his fortunes, by which the boy knew that he had no desire to be reminded of his ignominious dismissal from the pack. It seemed probable that Nguvu would turn into a dangerous old misogynist, who would become a cattle or man killer and eventually end his life in a battle against spears or bullets, as such beasts always do.

KASPA stayed the day with him. He did not know what to do. In his mind a fierce anger against Bulu held sway, but he knew that his only safety lay in keeping out of the big lion's way. He dared not remain in the district, for sooner or later his enemy would take him at a disadvantage with no trees or rocks to hand, and then he could not live a minute in combat with that terrific strength.

When night came he took leave of Nguvu and headed away up-river. He had determined to seek the high veld where Paka had been fond of hunting when the dry season was firmly established. It was nearly a hundred miles to the cave in the donga, but he accomplished it in two nights. He killed a dik-dik (a small forest antelope) on the way, and when at last the high, open country was about him he felt quite cheerful and contented.

Things were different from what he had expected. The Bomogo had not yet left the district, and the plains were covered with their cattle and the little mud-built villages in which both men and cattle lived.

These little enclosures of bush and hard-baked mud had always been empty, and frequently half destroyed, when Kaspa had seen them before. But now they were occupied by hordes of evil-smelling natives and mongrel dogs that barked at the lion smell drifting down-wind to them.

Kaspa took up his quarters in the old cave and went about his hunting. He left the larger game alone and concentrated upon tommy, grant, duiker, and such creatures as he could overpower without trouble. His hunting was successful. At first he had found it difficult to steal up on a buck single-handed and capture it with a quick rush. But after a few failures he discovered that there were easier ways of hunting than those employed by the lions.

For instance, he could run down his quarry like the cheetah. Let him get within fifty yards of a buck, and he would follow it without difficulty over five miles of veld until the exhausted animal could no longer keep ahead of him.

He discovered this hitherto unknown attribute with great pleasure. Such heavy beasts as lions are disinclined to run long distances, and rapidly become blown, but Kaspa found there were few animals that could match him over a long distance.

His first dash at a buck was usually unsuccessful. It would bound away as fast as himself, and sometimes faster, but after a mile or so the animal would be straining every nerve to maintain its lead, while Kaspa would be running quite freely and with plenty in hand. The chase invariably ended one way—in the success of the pursuer.

For a time this method of hunting contented him, but the urge to experiment and innovate which was in his blood caused him to wonder if he could not copy the tactics of other animals besides those of the cheetah and the wild dog. One night he lay out along the branch of a tree, over a trail to a waterhole in the forest. As a duiker passed below him he dropped upon it, and broke its neck. That was the leopard's trick, and owing to his ability to climb trees he could easily employ it.

On nights when he felt disinclined to chase his meat on the veld he procured it by this means. But though for a time the chase kept him busy, he was not altogether satisfied; he found loneliness disagreed with him. There had always been the communal interests of the pack, the games in the evening sunlight or under the full moon when the kill had been sampled and every one was full and happy. Here there was nothing but the same routine night after night, and the daytime sleep that was singularly unsatisfying without the comfortable breathing of his friends to sing his lullaby.

Also it was ill to be forced to depend upon himself alone. Nothing attempted to molest him. Mixture of lion and man

as he was, the creatures of veld and forest treated him with respect and often with fear; but he himself feared man, and here he was surrounded by him. From the edge of his donga he could look out upon the numerous herds of cattle and the youths and children in charge of them.

At night his approach to the manyatta was heralded by shouts and the waving of brands, for it was second nature to him to employ the hunting grunt of the lion, and these people could not tell the difference. He feared man because he did not understand him, and most of all he feared that he would be surprised in his sleep and butchered as he had seen Mua butchered.

Together with his brothers, he would not have feared, for in their strength and courage he had supreme confidence, but what could he do single-handed against a number of creatures each as powerful as himself? It did not occur to Kaspa that man might be as frightened of him as of a lion. He thought that beings who controlled creatures as powerful as oxen must indeed be among the most powerful of beasts.

Ruka and Dogo could kill an ox easily enough, but in his present stage of development he could not. It took him all his time to kill a big grant, or a kongoni. He must, then, respect creatures who drove oxen about like sheep.

The discovery of how puny his enemy actually was came to him by accident. Walking along the edge of the forest one morning after a night's hunting he came upon a man at work upon something of interest. Kaspa realized that the man had not seen him, and with a single motion he swung himself into a tree and concealed himself in its foliage.

The man held a long broad-bladed knife in his hand. He was searching about for a rough stone. Having found one to his satisfaction, he came slowly towards the tree in which Kaspa was concealed, whetting the knife upon the stone.

A sapling growing beside the trunk of the tree appeared to please him. He put away the stone and began to chop at it, using his knife like an ax. Kaspa was astonished to see that each blow of the instrument left a deep white gash in the hard wood. He had been in great fear when the man approached his hiding-place, but now fear began to be swallowed up in curiosity. He craned down from his leafy screen the better to observe.

The man did not seem satisfied with his tool. After a few blows he produced the stone again and worked with it for some minutes. Kaspa marked his manner of grinding the edge of the blade, and wondered at the purpose of it.

In his interest he exposed himself too much. The man looked up and saw him. A grimace of terror distorted his face; his mouth opened in a shout of horrified amazement. Then he hurled the knife at the dreadful apparition above him, turned and fled. By chance the knife struck Kaspa in the shoulder and stuck his flesh. He uttered the awful roar of the enraged lion, tore the thing loose, and leaped out of the tree intent upon the destruction of the creature that had wounded him.

The man was twenty paces away, running with all his speed for the veld and the assistance of the cattle herders, but Kaspa overhauled him as a greyhound overhauls a terrier.

His progress was a succession of leaps each ten feet long. His legs seemed literally to fly over the ground as though equipped with powerful springs, but his body did not rise in the air; rather it crouched and glided, flattening down like that of a four-footed animal when it runs at its highest speed. He overtook the man and dealt him a terrific sweeping blow on the side of the head, with the hand that held the knife.

The sharp blade entered the man's neck below the ear, and it was the impact of the hilt that sent him spinning into the bush with a cracked skull and a severed jugular. Still retaining his hold upon the knife, Kaspa walked up to the dead man, growling harshly. He examined him with nose and eyes. He was interested in the wound that had killed him, and noticed that his hand was covered with blood, which also stained the knife.

A slight nervous contraction of the body caused him to thrust a restraining hand against the man's chest. The knife sunk into the flesh, and Kaspa discovered what had caused the other wound. He examined the knife carefully, stroked it, and sustained a stinging wound that caused him to drop the thing as though it were a snake.

Thought enlightened him. Of course the knife would cut if wrongly handled—did not a claw scratch by accident when one was playing? He picked up the knife gingerly and made his way to the cave, where he spent the morning playing with the thing and learning its habits. By the time he settled down to his sleep he knew all about the knife and how to handle it

so that it would hurt others and not himself.

WITH dusk, Kaspa woke and turned to his treasure. The knife was a fine European weapon with a double-edged ten-inch blade and a horn handle, from which curved two metal projections forming a solid hilt. It had originally belonged to an official who had once visited that district, from whom it had been stolen by the man Kaspa had killed.

He weighed it in his hand and found it heavy and balanced, unlike any stick he had ever grasped. He pondered the uses to which it might be put, as yet not dreaming to what uses he would put it. He remembered the stone with which the man had rubbed it, and decided he must find that and apply it to a similar purpose.

He returned to the forest, where he found the dead body already torn by the hyenas. The ghouls departed in haste at his growls and the smell of him, and he searched the man with the hyenas sitting watching, as they always watched him when he was thus occupied with a kill.

The native wore a goat-skin robe, and beneath this a girdle of monkey-skin to which was attached a pouch. In the pouch were many things—snuff-horn, a needle, a flint and some caked tobacco, and lastly the stone. To Kaspa it was a very ordinary stone, but he knew that it had its uses. It seemed desirable to keep it in the receptacle used by the man, so he untied the thong and attempted to fasten it about his own body, but this he found beyond his ability. He could undo a knot, but he could not tie one.

This set his active brain to work. Attached to the main thong, which acted as a belt, was a lesser strip of softened hide supporting the pouch. In it were two knots.

Kaspa undid one of them carefully, observing the twists and turns of the thong. He then attempted to replace it as it had been. After a time he succeeded. It was then simple to gird himself with the belt, with its monkey-skin breech clout. He had no use for the latter, but he required the pouch, and it did not occur to him to separate the things. He placed the stone in the pouch and, grasping the knife in his hand, set out upon the night's hunt.

Upon a strip of level veld he saw three tommy buck feeding in the moonlight. By careful stalking he managed to get within fifty yards of them before they ran, and when they did he selected the fattest of them and pursued it. Within a couple of miles he ran it down and, ranging up alongside the exhausted animal, leaped suddenly upon it and drove the knife into its neck. The result was all that he had hoped for; there was no further resistance from the buck.

It did not take him long to realize that the knife was a more certain instrument of death than either fang or claw. He was now armed and able to do battle with his fiercest foes. At this thought a glow of pride and exultation pervaded his being. He stood with one foot upon the body of the dead tommy and raised his voice in the full roar of the triumphant lion. It had not the power and music of old Paka's efforts, but it was sufficiently terrifying to cause the veld dwellers to huddle together in snorting groups, and the dogs in the manyatta to break into frightened barking. Kaspa slung his kill over his shoulder and strode down to the river, there to eat in comfort.

His meal finished, he stowed the remainder of the meat in a tree-fork, as a leopard does, out of the way of the hyenas and vultures, and made his way up from the river valley towards the nearest of the manyatta. He had acquired an interest in man and the things of man's making. The manyatta was not a large one. It contained half a dozen families of Bomogo, a like number of cattle, and some sheep.

The boma was made of five-foot posts driven into the earth and reenforced by stacked thorn bushes. The six huts were built against the interior of this, their flat mud roofs on a level with its top. The clear space in the middle was occupied by the cattle. Kaspa made the circuit of the place, testing the wind from all directions. His nose informed him of the occupants, and his eyes showed him that no man was abroad in the moonlight.

Several dogs had got his wind, and they were all hysterically barking. The cattle were uneasy, snorting loudly their fear of the lion reek, but no man issued from the huts to quell the uproar. Kaspa took two swift paces and sprang lightly over the barrier into the sand of the cattle-yard. He crouched there motionless, waiting.

The dogs fled to cover by the huts, where they hid, snarling and whimpering; the sheep huddled against the further boma; but one young bull lowered his head and charged the intruder with determination. Kaspa snarled, leaped lightly aside and struck the plunging beast in the neck

with the knife. The bull fell forward on his knees, bellowing mournfully.

The dogs immediately rushed him in a wave of furious snapping forms. They were careful not to close, contenting themselves with jumping in and out again, feinting at his legs and throat. Kaspa leaped to meet the foremost, eager to get his hands on these presumptuous creatures and break them to pieces, but they eluded him like shadows, and, as those before melted away from his advance, those behind closed in.

He was astonished. These were the tactics of wild dogs with an oryx or a wildebeeste, but he had never thought to see a lion so treated. He knew his danger; it was imperative to damage some of the animals at once before they closed upon him and overwhelmed him by their numbers. He made a sideways feint, whirled and leaped, and a howling dog was hurled against the boma with a crash that broke most of the bones in its body.

The cries of the dogs and short coughing roars of the lion-man made a noise sufficient to wake the dead. It awakened the terrified Bomogo, who proceeded to blow up their smoldering fires and beat drums and tins with the object of scaring the intruder. Kaspa had heard that sound before. He was reminded of Mua fastened to the tree while the screeching ape creatures closed in upon her. Silent as he had come, he leaped the stockade and vanished into the night, leaving pandemonium behind him.

HE RETURNED to the river at a slow trot, pondering the ways of men. They were not the powerful beings he had thought them to be. They were evidently afraid of him, and singularly helpless at night.

Their dogs were more dangerous than themselves because of their pack tactics. Massed aggression seemed to be the hunting custom of men. They were forceful enough when they closed in upon Mua and shot her to death, and on that occasion they had not shown much fear of the other lions.

He concluded that men, like dogs, were only to be feared in numbers, and in daylight. They could inflict harm at a distance, as witness the fate of Mua and his own experience when the man threw the knife at him, but their principal weapon was noise, which confused and affrighted their antagonist. Obviously one must tackle these people only by night, and then without allowing the noise they made to upset one's nerves. He disliked noise extremely, but not in the same way that the true lions did; them it drove frantic. He decided that men were foolish creatures who ran shouting about and doing nothing when an enemy was at the mouth of their lair.

It was a warm night, and he spent the remainder of it happily disporting himself in the river. This predilection for bathing had been a source of astonishment to the lions. It was all very well to swim when you wanted to cross a deep place, but to play about in the water like an otter was most uncomfortable. Kaspa had caught the habit from the wart hogs.

They invariably cooled themselves in the river, and were fond of lying in the mud. One hot day in the low country when the flies had annoyed him, he had copied the example of the wild pigs with considerable enjoyment. Later he had noticed that other creatures, such as elephants and water buck, also indulged in this amusement, which confirmed his liking for it.

He did not swim very well, the speedy strokes were beyond him, but at the dog paddle, which is the natural method of four-footed beasts, he did long distances in the big rivers. His endurance was astonishing, and he could remain under water for long periods.

While he was swimming about on this occasion the elephant herd came down out of the forest to this deep pool for their nightly bath. Kaspa lay on a low bough, and watched the huge creatures playing in the water, squirting each other with their trunks and screaming loud enough to be heard miles away.

He reflected that the elephants were supremely careless of all other things in the wild. They made no attempt at concealment. A foolish way of going on, he thought it, for unobtrusiveness had become a part of his nature. Towards dawn he returned to the cave and lay down to bask in the sun at its entrance.

He had fallen into a doze in which strange dreams troubled him, dreams wherein he seemed to be lying in a house with white faces bending over him, when a faint vague murmur of sound penetrated to his mind. He roused himself and listened. The sound of men's voices was distinctly audible. He went swiftly to the edge of the donga, climbed up, and looked out.

A herd of men came slowly across the

plain accompanied by numerous dogs, who were held on thongs and tugged away at their masters, craning their noses eagerly to the ground. Kaspa's lips writhed back from his teeth as he watched. He knew they were on his trail, and he remembered the fate of Mua. Silently he stole away down the donga, careful to avoid showing his head above its steep banks.

He had not gone more than a hundred yards before he again heard the sound of voices. Concealing himself in a bush, he looked out and saw two men approaching. They had spears and shields in their hands, and ostrich plumes nodding upon their heads. As he watched, one of the men stuck his spear into the earth and bent to examine his foot. He drew a knife from his belt and did something to his sandal, afterwards replacing the weapon in its sheath.

Instinctively Kaspa glanced down to his side; a similar article hung suspended there. He thrust his knife into it as the man had done. At once he understood its uses and the added freedom of movement he obtained by having both hands unencumbered. The men came on together, talking in low tones. Kaspa turned back along the donga, traveling up-wind, towards the forest.

Suddenly he raised his head and sniffed. There were men on that side also. It was against every instinct to break cover in daylight in the face of his foes. He found a good hiding-place behind some rocks, and waited.

The two men overhauled him from behind and seemed to be passing, but suddenly one turned away from his fellow and scouted round the rocks to see what was behind them.

He saw Kaspa. His mouth opened in a wide "O" of amazement. He stood there as though frozen, staring. Kaspa charged him, growling ferociously. The native's hand went back and his spear shot out at Kaspa's chest. The lion-man warded off the blow with one arm, but the sharp steel scored into his skin as it slid under his arm.

Kaspa roared terribly as his whirling arms beat in the man's face and he sprang on over the struggling body.

At once there was an uproar all about him. The men on the plain above came rushing forward, shouting and beating their drums, the dogs yelped furiously, and the companion of the man Kaspa had killed suddenly began screeching like a monkey.

THE lion-man ran down the donga at the top of his speed, taking rocks and bushes in his stride. The shouts and drum noises faded behind him and he slackened his headlong pace, but soon the barking dogs came nearer. They were pursuing him, gaining on him. He increased his pace again until a full mile separated him from the cave, but still the barking and yapping followed him. The donga was becoming choked with bush near the river. He leaped out upon the veld and settled down to a long even stride that would run down the fastest buck in half an hour.

Up on the high veld he sped, towards a distant line of mountains, misty in the morning air. He breathed easily and deeply; his legs were like steel springs beneath him. After a time he looked back. There was no sign of the men, but a number of scurrying forms showed dark against the grass half a mile behind him. The dogs were running mute, hot upon his trail. Kaspa laughed—an un-lionlike sound of which he was sometimes guilty. He ran on, reveling in his speed and strength and in the crisp morning air. Another mile, and he paused upon an anthill, breathing deeply, and slightly quicker than at first.

Behind him the dogs still followed his scent. They had not gained upon him, but neither had they lost ground.

He turned up towards the forest and settled down to run his best. Half a mile of that steady grade made his breath come gustily from lungs that were beginning to labor.

He began to get angry, with the savage anger of the hunted lion. The dogs had gained upon him uphill; they were now giving tongue excitedly, with the quarry in full view. Kaspa put in a burst of speed over the last grassy hill and entered the shade of the big trees.

On the fringe of the forest the growth was not dense. There were scattered clumps of big trees, with thick bush about them and spreading glades of tangled grass. Half a mile further on the jungle conquered and there was no more grass, only the huge trees climbing into the sky and the holly-like shrub about their roots. Kaspa dropped into his long striding, slouching walk. He had run far enough from these yapping curs; he was a lion, and there were limits to his discretion.

In a small glade encircled by juniper trees he turned and drew his knife. The dogs came streaming out of the screen of bush, yelping and leaping with eagerness.

Kaspa snarled. He was like a waterbuck at bay with the wild dogs about him. The indignity of it roused him to madness.

The first wave of big brown mongrels reached him and flung itself upon him. There was no feinting and jumping back on this occasion; the dogs were numerous and excited by the long chase—they wished to get to grips with the quarry and pull it down. Kaspa and his foremost assailants went to ground in a rolling snarling tangle. His speed and strength were amazing. The knife whirred and glittered. In a moment he had regained his feet, streaming with blood from a dozen wounds. Four dogs writhed and shrieked upon the ground, their bodies ripped and stabbed and broken in a frightful manner.

The second onrushing wave of slower-paced animals swerved and broke and tossed in a maze of leaping forms about the crouching lion-man. Kaspa roared and charged them. Round and about the clearing he hunted them, fierce and quick as a leopard, disregarding those that attacked him from behind, for he was past caring for wounds, but catching those he pursued with sideways springs and sweeping blows of the knife that made a shambles of the clearing within the space of one minute.

Dogs leaped at his throat—they met his lightning punches and collapsed with broken ribs and jaws. Dogs bit at his heels—he whirled and struck and the dreadful knife cut through bone and muscle and maimed where it did not kill. The last of the pack rushed howling from the scene of that slaughter, their courage turned to terror by the creature, half ape, half lion, that used the strength of the animal and the intelligence of the man against their clumsy tactics.

Kaspa stood unmolested in the clearing among a dozen dead and dying dogs. He was spattered with blood and scared with gaping flesh-wounds, but he shook his yellow mane in triumph, and the full-throated roar of the lion echoed among the trees.

A sixteen-year-old boy with the torso of a Hercules and the eye of a lion—truly a sight to thrill the hearts of gods and men, but to the natives who caught a glimpse of that splendid figure among the trees he was no mortal. They ran wildly back upon their comrades, babbling of devils and wood-gods. From that moment the legend of the Bomogo lion-god was firmly

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established. There was no more hunting of Kaspa.

The lion-man paid no further attention to his pursuers. With unhurried step he went off into the forest, found a stream, and sat down to bathe his wounds and sharpen his knife. He was elated and fiercely proud. He had fought a good fight worthy of the stock from which he sprang, and he had now proved something of his capabilities. From time to time soft roars of triumph burst from him, mixed with strange singing noises that were certainly not of the habits of the lion. New thoughts were entering his head. He was strong, and a killer; in his present mood he feared nothing. Had the natives come upon him to the number of a thousand he would have closed with them and died fighting in true lion fashion.

After a time his mind quietened; he began to review the events of the day more soberly. It was apparent that the knife gave him a great advantage. In hands as powerful as his it was invincible if only it could be driven home. There was the crux of the whole matter: an opening had to be made for the decisive blow, and it depended upon his cunning and agility to make that opening. At the back of his mind was Bulu. When the big lion had driven him out of the pack he had determined to return and exact vengeance when the opportunity offered.

The knife had made this possible. Armed with the shining weapon, he could challenge the lion and kill him in fair fight, and henceforth no lion should be his master. He would rule as old Paka had ruled, by virtue of superior strength and cunning. But he must be careful how he opposed his frail body to the might of the monarch of the wild. A sure stroke with the knife would give him victory, but he must be able to deliver it without risk of a blow or bite from his antagonist, for one such, fairly dealt, would cripple or kill him without a question. As the dogs' agility was greater than his own, so his speed and facility of sudden movement was greater than the lion's. He had proved that in many a tussle with his playmates.

He remembered the tactics of the dogs, the feint, the leap, and the turnings and twistings when pursued. In just such a way he could deal with Bulu, but he had an advantage which the dogs lacked: they were unable to deliver a mortal wound with one stroke at the full reach of the arm, and they could not parry a blow as he could do.

He had long since learned that the jerky blow of the lion's paw could be dodged if expected, or warded off by raising the arm and sliding the striking member away from one so as to diminish its power. This latter method was not infallible, for so great was the strength behind the lion's blow that a certain amount of it expended itself upon its object despite his most cunning parries. But there was a way to elude this strength. It lay in guarding the blow before it had actually been dealt. He had discovered this in play with Ruka and Dogo.

The moment he sensed that the huge paw was aimed at him, he pressed his hand upon it, and the force had been expended in a push instead of a stroke, a push that could not be resisted but might be yielded to. The result had always been to throw him violently aside, but after a time he had not minded this, for he found that he did not lose his feet and was none the worse for the experience.

His method, then, would be at any cost to avoid closing with his antagonist. He must dodge and jump, seeking always an opportunity to use the knife while keeping clear of the enemy's jaws—an easy matter for one as speedy as himself; and, where unable to escape a paw-stroke, he would parry it and allow its force to assist him in jumping away.

So far he would be master of the situation, but if once Bulu was able to throw his weight upon him it would finish the contest immediately. He knew that, but it did not deter him from his purpose. He was convinced that he was Bulu's master, and was eager to put his claim to the proof.

Tomorrow he would seek the thorns and his brothers again, and woe to the big tawny-mane if he were still with them. He climbed into a big tree, stretched himself out on a bough like a leopard and fell asleep.

CHAPTER III

THE PACK LEADER

DOWN in the thorn country the nights were bright, not with the misty radiance of the veld, but with a warm all-pervading glow which was a portion of the heat and glare of the tropic day which was reflected from the tropic moon.

The clearings were as light as a day made gloomy by an eclipse. The thorn

bush was a carpet of interlacing shadows, clean silver between. In the middle of one of the small glades in the thorns the lion family were gathered about a zebra kill, not yet cold.

Bulu and Kali ate slowly and discriminately; the younger lions lay watching, for their leader had not overcome his distrust of them sufficiently to allow them to share his meal while he was yet occupied in eating it. Their turn would come later. They awaited with a dignity that did not conceal their distaste at this cavalier treatment.

At a faint sound from the bush both heads turned enquiringly. Kaspa stood there silently observing them. He had heard the hunting-calls and the triumphant roar at the zebra's death. His keen nose had soon led him to the feast. Both the young lions grunted a greeting, at the sound of which Bulu spun round and faced the intruder with lifted lip. Kaspa drew his knife and came forward, disregarding the growl with which Kali declared her adherence to her new mate. He faced Bulu at three yards' range and snarled a direct challenge at him.

Bulu roared and attacked. It was a rush and a leap. Kaspa side-stepped the leap, and as one sweeping forepaw hooked at him he met it with outstretched hand and, resisting its pressure, allowed himself to be flung aside as light and sure footed as a dik-dik. But in the instant when that paw had touched him he had driven the knife through it just above the elbow.

Bulu whirled, roaring. He crouched, watching his antagonist, whom he had discovered to be both elusive and deadly. How he had sustained the wound in his paw he did not know, but he was sure that Kaspa had inflicted it. Kali made a sideways rush at her one-time cub, intent upon chasing him away from Bulu, whom she found to be as much to her liking as Paka had been. Kaspa evaded her by a narrow margin; he had not been expecting an attack from that quarter.

Taking advantage of this demonstration in flank, Bulu charged again, and this time he was more difficult to avoid. A flailing paw descended upon Kaspa's head, and though he guarded it by allowing its force to slide down his extended arm, it drove him to the ground. Bulu's body reared up to crush him beneath its weight, and Kaspa slipped sideways, out from under, at the same time driving the knife into his opponent's ribs. Bulu went fighting mad. He rebounded from the ground like a ball. and like a ball went bounding after his elusive enemy to and fro across the clearing, startling the night with his furious voice.

Kaspa, quicker than he, and baffling his desperate lunges by springing towards and past him at an acute angle, used his knife like a chopper and scored several hits on the massive paws that struck him. Kaspa's good fortune did not last; he cannoned against a thorn, lost his balance, and was knocked into the grass. Bulu was upon him before he could get away. The lion placed restraining paws upon him and reached for his throat with gaping jaws. This was the crisis which Kaspa had feared.

His strength was insufficient to keep the lion's head back, and he knew that he must deliver a mortal stroke at once while he was still able to profit by it. With a great effort he drove the knife to the hilt in the lion's throat where it joined the chest. Then he grappled the killer's arms and, wedging his shoulder beneath his chin, hugged him as tight as he could.

Bulu, stricken to death, was unable to loosen his clutch. He rolled over with his enemy, pulled up his hind legs and threw Kaspa across the clearing. Kaspa came to his feet at once, but Bulu did not rise to meet him. The lion lay gasping and struggling like one in a fit. In a few moments his struggles ceased and he straightened out, dead. Kaspa, with distorted face and laboring lungs, stood watching, ready to dodge and fly on the instant, but as no movement disturbed his fallen enemy he sprang forward and retrieved his knife. Then he attempted to give the victory cry, but only a weak gurgle came from him, and blood bubbled at his lips.

He looked around dazedly upon the silent, watchful lions and the snarling lioness, then slowly drew off into the bush. It was the instinct of the wounded creature to crawl away and hide until it was strong again. Kaspa did not crawl; he could still walk, but not without some trouble. His legs and stomach were scratched and bruised, and his chest felt as if it had been crushed, as indeed it had beneath five hundred pounds of jolting bone and muscle.

He went slowly downhill in the direction of the river, and when at last he reached it his strength was almost spent. The cool water revived him somewhat; he lay by it a long time, drinking and bathing his scratches. Then he sought out a dense

thicket among some rocks and composed himself to sleep and recover.

Kaspa lay three days in his hiding-place. His legs healed quickly and gave him little trouble, but his strained chest was a more serious matter, which mended itself slowly. On the fourth night he roused himself and left his shelter. He had neither eaten nor drunk during this period of recuperation, for sleep had not wasted him, and shade had conserved the moisture in his body. He felt stiff and sore, but energetic and hungry. His first duty was to drink his fill at the stream, then he attempted to roar the announcement of his recovery, but, finding it pained him, did not persist. He walked slowly up into the thorns, trying with ears and nose to locate the pack.

MIDNIGHT found him still wandering. He hungered, but had not killed. He was not strong enough to run down a buck; there were no forest trees and narrow game-paths here to facilitate the leopard's tactics, and the moonlight was too brilliant to make stalking easy. He saw no sign of his friends until near dawn, and then it was the slouching form of Ruka crossing a clearing. Kaspa called to him, and the call brought Dogo into view. The three of them gathered in the clearing and exchanged news.

The young lions were outcasts, it appeared. After the death of Bulu, Kali had gone off down-river and attached herself to a pack under the sway of an old black-mane named Guru. Guru had not welcomed the intrusion of Ruka and Dogo into his circle, and they had been forced to fend for themselves. This information was conveyed to Kaspa by a lengthy process of thought-transmission and pantomime, helped out by grunts and snortings which signified certain thoughts and experiences usual to the communal life of lions.

For instance, Ruka grunted "Guru," and looked downstream with raised hackles and snarling lips. Kaspa got the impression of an old black-mane standing warning the young lions away from his domain. The rest of the story was presented in a similar manner. Kaspa told them about finding the knife and his battle with the the dogs. He announced that he was now a great fighter and afraid of no lion; he could kill Guru if he wished to. They assented—look what he had done to Bulu! It was obvious that he was a great chief among lions.

They examined the knife, but could not make much if it. It was a man-made thing and, as they had no hands, outside their ken. Kaspa suggested to them that they should form another pack—three young bachelors, sufficient unto themselves. They assented, but pointed out that they had no hunting-ground nor any wise leader to direct their movements.

Kaspa averred that henceforth he acknowledged no leadership but his own; that he had a good district—that place where he had obtained the knife and where Paka used to spend the dry weather. If his brothers cared to hunt under his leadership they might do so, but if not he would hunt alone. The young lions were impressed by this independence. They were tired of wandering about the hot thorn country, submitting to the insults of Bulu and Guru and other old lions who, not having reared them, did not feel any friendship for them. They declared for the bachelor pack and the leadership of Kaspa.

Kaspa, delighted by this demonstration of confidence and affection, lost no time in issuing his first commands. They would, he intimated, proceed to catch a buck. Any buck, so long as it was not a waterbuck, whose meat was tough and unpalatable. He directed them to go upwind until they found game, and then to drive it. He would follow close behind, and if they would bring a buck or zebra within twenty yards of him he would not fail to get it.

The plan was carried out. A herd of impalla was located, and Kaspa concealed himself in a thicket through which ran a game path—the only one in several hundred yards—while the lions worked their way slowly across the wind above the herd, grunting fearsomely. The impalla drifted away before the lions' approach, until they were within fifty yards of Kaspa.

Dogo then roared suddenly, pitching his voice to sound as if it came from the bush before them. The impalla stopped, and stood wondering. It was impossible to tell where the lions were. They had smelt them upwind a moment before; now they were roaring from exactly the opposite direction. It would be fatal to run into them with the wind.

They huddled there in perplexity, while the lions stole upon them from the flank and then suddenly scattered in all directions. A young buck and an old doe took the path where Kaspa hid, and came dashing down it with the enormous bounds for which these animals are famous. Kaspa let the doe go by, launched himself at the buck's shoulder and brought it down by a neck hold. He then knifed it neatly

through the throat and, raising his still-kicking prey on his shoulders, carried it out into the moonlight.

The brothers hurried to the feast. Kaspa, who had been making experiments and who had always found it difficult to tear off steaks with his teeth, cut strips of meat from the haunch and sat upon the ground man-fashion to eat them. The lions ate with the dignified enjoyment of their kind.

The night had been far advanced before the kill was made, and the dawn came before they had finished eating. Kaspa stowed the remainder of the meat in a tree, to the lions' astonishment, and they all went down to the river to drink. By ill luck, they encountered Guru and his pack—three males and four females, including Kali. The black-mane, having learnt of Bulu's death, was determined to possess his hunting-ground, which was richer in game than his own. He did not consider the claims of the two young lions worthy of consideration, but he opened his eyes when he saw their companion and learned from Kali that this was Bulu's slayer and her own cub.

Guru had passed a part of his life in contact with men. He thought he recognized man despite the lion smell, and of man he was terribly afraid. Instead of standing his ground and warning the weaker party to beware of him, he turned and slunk into cover with uneasy haste.

Kaspa allowed the man-laugh to wrinkle his face at this tribute to his power. That he, the hairless cub who had once been the weakling of the pack, should have become so formidable a creature as to cause a great chieftain like Guru to turn tail without hesitation at the mere sight of him, was flattering to his sense of importance and the new-found confidence in his ability to hold his own with all comers.

He walked up the bank past the deserter, Kali and her friends without a glance at them, and behind him came Ruka and Dogo, his staunch adherents once more, and a force to be respected under their redoubtable leader.

They lay up in a thicket that day, and at night, having satisfied their hunger with the remains of the impalla, set out for the hills. In three days they reached their objective and settled down in Paka's old den, a place of pleasant memories. Game was plentiful. The Bomogo removed themselves from the vicinity of the cave when they knew that the lion-god had returned, and with their departure went the only enemies that the lions need fear.

LIFE was interesting and pleasurable for the next three years. Kaspa perfected his methods of hunting, learning from leopard and cheetah and the packs of wild dogs that occasionally visited the district. He gained in strength and speed until he could handle a wildebeeste by himself—run it down, break its neck by sheer strength, and bear home the carcass on his shoulders.

Ruka and Dogo grew to their full power and stature, magnificent black-maned lions with intelligence beyond their kind, due to their association with the lion-man. They roamed afar at times, and one day Dogo returned from a three days' absence bringing with him a fine young lioness called Mala, whom Kaspa welcomed to the pack. Ruka was not long in following his brother's example, and he introduced a mate, Zito by name.

Kaspa, now leader of a pack of five efficient hunters, was a power in the land. At times other families attempted to settle in the upland territory, but they were warned off without difficulty. Kaspa's pack was solid behind him when he took the offensive, and there were few creatures that cared to dispute his commands. Thus, king of the Nyoka Plains, he flourished until the great drought came and life became a serious business.

The drought was heralded by high winds and overcast skies, unusual at that time of the year. In a week or so the clouds vanished without shedding their moisture, and day after day the sky was a burnished blue, through which sailed the pitiless fiery sun. May came and went, and no rain fell. By the end of June the veld began to wither, and the numerous small streams on the edge of the forest to dry up. The game slowly drifted away out of the district in search of new grass, and the buffalo retreated farther into the hills.

The Bomogo descended to the thorns, but after a few weeks, in which they found conditions no better at that level, returned to the higher altitudes, where the rain might be expected to fall first. By October the land was a desolate expanse of blackened veld and drooping trees. Fires had swept the plains, and, there being no moisture to fertilize the ground, the new grass did not appear. Sharp black stubble lacerated the feet of all unprovided with hard hoofs, and the bitter dust swirled about, blown by the trade wind that had lost its coolness and become like the breath of a furnace.

Things began to go hardly with the oc-

cupants of the cave in the donga. There was no cover on the blackened veld; such buck as had not left the district stood out in the open plain, where it was impossible to approach them unseen.

Kaspa kept the larder supplied by his cheetah tactics until his feet became raw and tender from running over the sharp stubble, but the time came when both he and the lions limped painfully in their stride, leaving blood spoor at every step. Other lions began to drift across their hunting-ground following the game herds, and at night the hungry roaring of desperate beasts arose on all sides.

Kaspa would not trek. For one thing the lionesses were in no condition to undertake a long journey, and for another he doubted if matters were any better elsewhere. The incursion of far-traveled hungry lions into his district was proof of this. They were a savage, cantankerous crew. When Kaspa's pack were fortunate enough to make a kill they were not left to enjoy it in peace. Lions and hyenas hurried to the feast from every quarter, and since it was impossible to dispute the ownership of every mouthful with a dozen ravenous interlopers, there was seldom enough meat to satisfy himslf and his brothers.

The periods of abstinence between kills became longer and more frequent. Sometimes they did not eat for ten days at a stretch, and their strength and agility diminished as their appetites increased. When things were at their worst the lionesses produced their litters, and Kaspa and the two lions had to be abroad night and day searching for sustenance for their charges. Kaspa turned his attention to the small buck of the forest. Duiker, bushbuck, monkeys—anything was acceptable to the famished lions, but the leopards were also in sore straits, and they had scared the animals so much with continual hunting that most of them had retired into the mountain forests to denser cover.

FOR nights and days on end the lion-man haunted the forest trails, lurking by the waterholes where the pigs came to drink, or climbing to the monkey roosts in the huge cedars in futile effort to match the leopard, the finest still-hunter of the wild, at his own game. Flanks grew thinner, coats grew dull and tempers short. The lions turned to the Bomogo manyatta for their food.

The natives were also in desperate plight. There was no grass for the cattle, and dozens of lions prowled around the boma at night seeking to steal their charges from under their noses. The carcasses of starved oxen were thrown out, to be consumed by the hyenas within the hour, and this gratuitous meat did not appease the large carnivora, nor even the hyenas that fought over it in broad daylight.

One night Kaspa and his friends rushed a manyatta, abstracted a lean oxen, and devoured it just outside the boma, to the noise of beating drums and howling natives. The Bomogo strengthened their boma and increased the height of the stockade so that it was proof against lions. It was not proof against Kaspa, but, having climbed in and made his kill, he could not get the carcass out to his friends. The Bomogo never molested him. They had learnt to distinguish his voice, and when he roared they sought the shelter of their huts and crouched there banging their drums to scare him away. But though he could sometimes feast himself, he had to provide for a dozen hungry lions that had attached themselves to his following despite all efforts to drive them away, and for the two lionesses in the cave.

They began to attack the cattle herds while grazing on the veld in broad daylight. The Bomogo resisted, and several lions and some natives where killed. In desperation the Bomogo despatched a deputation to the commissioner at Nyoka seventy miles away, begging him to protect them from the ravages of savage beasts.

Thus it was that Martin Sefton made a report to his superior at the coast which occasioned that gentleman surprise.

Loudon Grant was a fine specimen of a man in the early thirties. He stood six feet four in his socks, and weighed a hundred and ninety pounds of hard bone and muscle. Unfortunately he had not the easy-going disposition of most big men; he was hard, intolerant and something of a bully. When Sefton's report was placed before him, hot from the hands of a native runner, he was entertaining a guest, one Horton, an American from Toronto, who was engaged in traveling the world for health and pleasure.

The resident commissioner sat on the veranda of his bungalow, a long drink upon the table at his elbow, and, after begging his guest's indulgence, ripped off the cover of the report and glanced hurriedly through its contents.

"Bassi," he said to the waiting askari, who withdrew.

"What rubbish," said Grant in a scornful voice. "Sefton has been too long up there in the blue by himself. Did you ever hear such nonsense?" Horton opened eyes startlingly blue in his lean tanned face, and made the expected show of interest.

"What's he been doing?" He had almost fallen asleep while Grant was reading the report. It was a sleepy place, this little coastal town of Chola, with its steamy climate, dazzling white houses of Arab architecture, that almost forced the eyes to shut against their glare, and soft cooing of doves in the waving palm trees.

Grant tossed the report across to him. "Secret and confidential, of course, but there's no harm in your reading it if you want to. I, personally, think it's rubbish; I shall be interested to know how it strikes you."

The first part of the report dealt with the collection of hut tax and the condition of crops in the vicinity of the hill station of Nyoka. Then followed the portion that had aroused Grant's scorn.

"I have just received a deputation from the Bomogo. As you know, this tribe is distributed along both sides of the border, and I have ascertained that the district from which these people have come is beyond the headwaters of the Nyoka River and therefore out of my jurisdiction. This does not affect the curious story they have to tell.

"The drought is unusually severe in that part, I understand, and lions are becoming dangerous, actually raiding cattle and killing the herds in daylight. This is not extraordinary, of course, such things invariably happen in such conditions. But what excites my astonishment is a story they tell of a strange creature, half lion, half man, who leads these forays and apparently lives with the lions and shares their meat. They say they have known of this man for some years.

"He lives in a cave with two black-maned lions. On one occasion they hunted him with dogs and he killed most of their animals and made his escape. They describe him as enormous in stature and fleet of foot as a buck. His strength is prodigious, and he can pull down and carry off a zebra. They persist that he is a white man with yellow hair and a fair skin, much tanned, of course. To them he is a god, and they will not undertake any expedition against him, but they think we might induce him to leave the district, or at least refrain from continuing to kill their cattle.

"Do you remember the reports in the Press about a native in Northern Rhodesia who was found living with a lioness and sharing her kills? I wonder if there is anything in this story. There is seldom smoke without fire even in native communities. I am much interested, and shall endeavor to make further inquiries."

* * *

Horton returned the typewritten pages thoughtfully.

"You don't think there is anything in it?" he said.

Grant threw back his heavy dark head and roared out a laugh in the manner peculiar to him. "Witchcraft and sorcery," he scoffed. "A good wizard can impersonate a lion and make his people believe that he is one. They are too frightened to discriminate. The rumor spreads and creates fear and wonder far and wide, so that every herd boy is looking for a man running with the lions and fully persuaded he has seen one."

Horton pondered.

"I remember that story about the Rhodesian native, you know. He lived several years with a lioness, and when eventually she was shot he was inconsolable."

Grant yawned. "Travelers' tales mostly." he said. "Newspaper stunts and so on."

That did not please Horton, for he was the owner of the *Canadian Observer,* and newspaper stunts were dearer to him than anything in life.

His keen eyes narrowed slightly as he regarded his host. He was not attracted to Grant. It was good of the fellow to put him up considering there was a hotel of sorts that he could have gone to, but he was glad that the Malindi boat for which he was waiting would be in on the morrow and he could get away from this heavy-minded, boisterous person.

"What sort of a chap is this Sefton?" he enquired casually.

"Oh, rather young, and a bit too enthusiastic. Sensitive, nervous type; unfitted for the job he's got, if you ask me. A man's got to be hard to stand years of life in a place like Nyoka. It's right off the beaten track, and he doesn't see any one for months on end."

Horton nodded.

"Hard luck on a young fellow," he commented. He rose leisurely to his feet. "Well, I shall go for my usual stroll. What will you do?"

"Work," Grant growled, jerking his head at the open door of his office. He laughed jeeringly. "I must answer Sefton's letter

for one thing—tell him to pull himself together and keep off the bottle, and so on."

Horton was frowning as he walked out into the glaring sandy street. Surely that was not the way to talk to one's subordinates. If he had treated the opinion of one of his staff like that he would have felt ashamed of himself.

"Too enthusiastic, eh!" That was what was wrong with Loudon Grant—he had no enthusiasm in him. About as springy as a vegetable marrow.

He walked down through the palm grove along the shore. Supposing there were anything in this story of a man living among the lions—a white man? What a stunt for the *Observer!* He wished he had more time to investigate the matter; go up-country and see this young fellow Sefton, for instance. It might cost him a few dollars, but it was not that that worried him—he had plenty and to spare; it was a question of time. Of that he had very little to throw about.

Horton was still a busy man with a multitude of interests. Since he had gone from Vermont to Toronto to manage the *Observer,* twelve years before, he had not taken a holiday. This "world tour" had been forced upon him by his medical advisors, and before it was half finished he had decided to curtail it and get back to the collar.

When a man has spent all his life doing things, he cannot sit back and kill time while other folk cart him about and cook his meals for him. He intended to have one look at the Arab ruins of Malindi, which interested him, and then get away back to Canada and his job. He had cabled his people to that effect. Still, if he had the time he would like to look into this lion-man story. The instinct for news stirred in his mind like a long-forgotten scent. "No smoke without fire," had said young Sefton. By hookey, Horton agreed with him.

In his young days he would have been all over a rumor like that, sifting it out and making a great story out of it.

Acting on a sudden impulse, he returned to the Residency and asked if he might send a telegram to Sefton. Grant said he might. He suggested that Horton request Sefton to send a hair of the lion-man's tail for corroboration. Horton disregarded his pleasantries. He dispatched the following:

"Grant told me lion-man story. Can you vouch authenticity? Why not wizardry?"

In an hour he received the reply.

"Further investigations confirm. Convinced creature exists. My askari sergeant saw yellow-haired man in midst of lion pack."

That convinced Horton. "This is the most curious thing I have ever struck," he said. "I'm going to astonish the world with it. Produce that lion-man and get him to dictate his experiences and you have a world marvel."

Grant gave his apelike roar. "Fine!" he bellowed. Johnny on the spot, what? Ladies and gentlemen, this remarkable animal will now recite his adventures in the perilous wilderness." He dropped the manner of a showman and said more seriously: "Take it from me, it's all moonshine. The askari's word is of no account; he is a native like the rest of them, and sees magic in every shooting star."

"I'm going to look into it," said Horton quietly. "Tell me, is there any man I can get to investigate this thing for me? I don't mind paying for it, but I want some one to go up there and capture this man or beast, or whatever he is, and ship him to Montreal all charges forward."

"You're not serious?" said Grant, grinning.

"I certainly am," Horton replied. "I'll pay five hundred English pounds for that wild man. Who wants the money?"

Grant considered. He thought the whole thing absurd, but if this crazy fellow wished to throw his money away, it was a pity not to profit by it. "There is a man named Cloete, a Dutchman. He is the best hunter I know, and he happens to be in Chola at the moment."

"Where can I get hold of him?" said Horton in businesslike fashion.

"Go and sit down on the stoep and help yourself to a drink; I'll send for him." Grant called a boy and gave him orders, laughing.

Ten minutes later Horton was explaining his requirements to an enormous, bearded man, the biggest man he had ever seen. Jan Cloete heard the story about the lion-man without astonishment and with no expression of incredulity. He just did not comment on it.

When Horton had ended his tale and made his proposition, the Dutchman considered for a moment. He filled his pipe with pungent Boer tobacco, fitted it into an opening in his immense beard, and opined that if there were such a beast he could catch it. "The only thing is, Mr. Horton," he said slowly, "I shall want money to work with. Five hundred pounds is

all right, but if there is no lion-man to catch I cannot earn it."

"I'll pay all expenses," Horton told him.

Cloete cocked an eye at him. "One hundred pounds a month?"

"No," said Horton. "One hundred pounds, no matter how long it takes you to do the job."

Cloete sighed and acquiesced. "I will start for Nyoka to-morrow," he said. "You will please tell Fernandes at the shipping office where you want this animal sent. I will put him in a good cage and say how he must be fed. You will tell Mr. Saunders at the bank to give me the money when I bring the animal."

He heaved his enormous bulk out of the cane chair and took his departure, puffing clouds of smoke into the still air. The following morning James Horton left for Malindi, and afterwards Canada, on the little coasting steamer.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAPTIVE

THE evening wind died out over the veld. Along the line of distant mountains the last glow of the vanished sun lay like a striped banner. Shadows stole out from the fever thorns and formed a mottled carpet on the sand by the river's edge, the river that gurgled sleepily among the white stones as though tired out with its journeyings down from the windy heights of the Sabugo. As the sky turned to a deeper blue and one star began to mirror its brightness in a placid pool by the bank, lights sprang up in a little camp amongst the acacia trees.

Jan Cloete had pitched his own small tent a hundred yards from the bivouacs of his boys. These were of the Wahehe tribe, strangers to the district, but not to the animals that inhabited it. There were a dozen of them, stalwart, reserved fellows, game to tackle any dangerous job if they were well enough paid for it.

The hunters had been in camp by the river for two days, and Kaspa was aware of their presence, although they were, as yet, unaware of his. Cloete had explored every ravine and game trail within a mile without finding a trace of the tracks he sought.

Despite the information of the Bomogo, he was beginning to think that the story of the lion-man was a myth and that the hundred pounds which Horton had paid him in advance was all that he would get out of the venture. But as he sat that evening before his tent door chewing his pipe and speculating upon his next proceeding, the quarry he sought was within a short distance of him and about to announce his presence in unmistakable form.

A deep melancholy sound arose on the night air from upstream direction. "Oo-argh! Oo-argh! Ooargh-ah-ah-argh!"

Jan Cloete put down his pipe and bent forward, listening intently. The chatter about the cooking fires ceased suddenly. Again sounded that weird terrible music, vibrant with all the aching savagery of the wilderness, the yearning of vast solitudes beneath the compassionless stars.

This time the call had barely ceased before it was taken up and repeated in a burst of clamorous, frightening voices.

The Dutchman expelled his breath in a long gasp.

"Simba!" he called in a low voice. A tall, powerfully built native detached himself from the group by the fire and hastened forward. "You hear those lions up the stream, what do you make of them?"

"Two lions and two lionesses, Bwana," the man answered.

"And what else?" Cloete's gaze was on

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him in restrained eagerness. Simba was silent.

"You who are named like the lion, tell me what was that first beast that roared?" asked the Dutchman. "What lion speaks with that voice?"

The native answered, "It may be a small lion, Bwana, but no lion that I ever heard spoke like that one."

Cloete picked up his pipe and lit it with satisfaction.

"Ah! So like, and yet not quite like," he said. "An almost perfect imitation of a lion, one might say. But, man"—and his voice rose wonderingly—"what sort of a chest is it that can produce those notes?"

The native moistened his lips nervously. "If it is a man he is not like other men," he said almost fearfully.

Cloete roared at him. "Don't you start getting scared now! Man or devil, he's worth money to us, and we're going to get him. Hurry up that grub now. If they kill tonight I want to find where, and the sooner I start following them up the better."

Simba returned to the cook fire, where the conversation broke out again in low tones, and away up on to the veld went the echoing music of the lions, sighing in melancholy cadences through the river trees, causing tiny shivers to run up and down the spines of the men who listened.

Kaspa and his pack went off to hunt zebra. The rains had broken three weeks before, and the young grass was already carpeting the veld. Ten inches of rain had fallen, and though there was a lull in the downpour it was only a matter of a few days, and then the weather would break again and deluge the thirsty veld with life-giving moisture.

With the first storm the game had begun to return to their favorite pastures. Within a week food was plentiful again for the lions, and things resumed their normal course. The strange lions began to drift away to their own hunting-grounds, all except a few, who had to be intimidated into leaving the district to which they had no claim now that starvation no longer threatened. Kaspa and his people had survived the drought, but the cubs had not. Unable to lie hungry in the cave day after weary day, the lionesses had been driven out to join the search for food, and the famished hyenas had discovered and stolen their families.

The pack had been fortunate in not losing some of its full-grown members during this time of famine, for many lions had perished from various causes, among which the assult of hyenas could be counted. The scavengers, in hordes, had hung upon the heels of the hunting animals, waiting for them to make a kill. And when this happened even the might of the lion was not able to prevent them rushing the carcass and submerging it and frequently its owner in a wave of hunger-maddened beasts who had lost all fear in their lust for meat. More than one lion had been overwhelmed and killed in trying to defend its own property, and many bore the scars of contests in which they had been vanquished and forced to fly from their rapacious satellites.

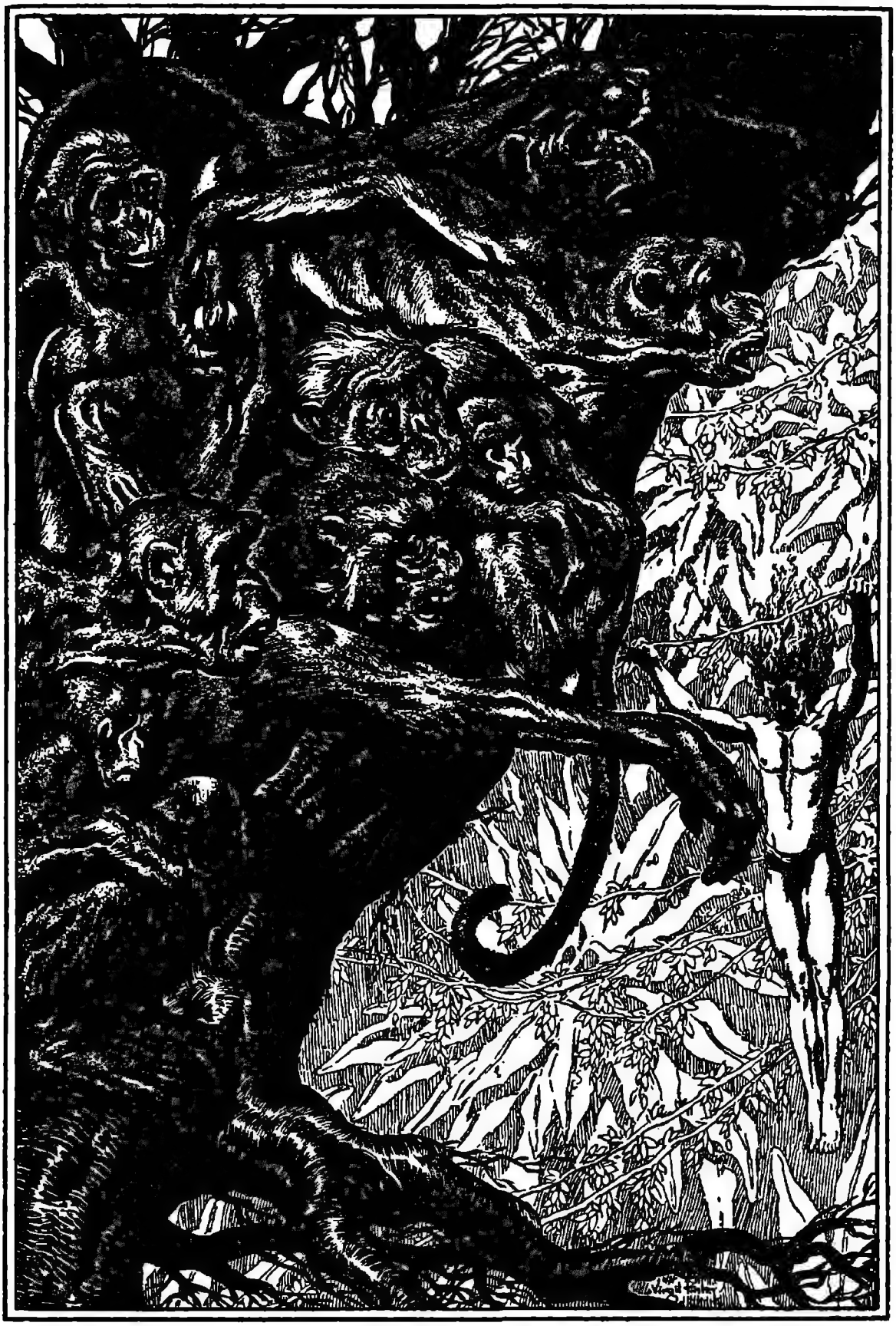
Kaspa and his friends had escaped that humiliation. They had kept together and shown a determined front to their enemies. Now they were once more full fed and free from the continual watching of the ghouls, ready to pounce upon their food immediately they pulled it down. On this night they scouted up past the white man's camp on to the open veld, where a zebra herd might be expected to be found feeding on the young grass in the starlight. They paid little attention to the scents of men and smoke wafted to them on the faint breeze, for immunity had given them a contempt for man, and they feared him not.

KASPA had investigated one afternoon, and had observed Cloete with some astonishment. He put him down to be a different type of the same human family with the appearance of which he was familiar. After all, there were different kinds of wildebeeste and zebra, why not man?

He had ceased to be interested in man, whom he had long since discovered to be a cowardly foolish brute, much like the baboon. Their ways and his were as far apart as the poles, and he had no wish that they should be any nearer. So he went about his hunting without regard to the camp by the river and the curious animal it contained. They winded a zebra herd before long, and Kaspa and his brothers set out to stampede them in the usual manner, whilst the lionesses lay up in a patch of tangled bush waiting for the moment to launch their attack.

The maneuver was successful. A fat young stallion was struck down and conveyed into the shadow of a grove of trees, and there the pack fed.

Jan Cloete, while eating his evening meal, had followed the progress of the



He could not but notice the similarity of his limbs to those of the tree-dwellers, and to imitate their playful activities was natural to a boy. . . .

hunt with understanding ear. The grunting and short roarings told him of the slow driving of the zebra herd, the outburst of violent sound described the sudden attack to fluster the quarry and stampede it to the waiting lionesses, and the long triumphant "kill" roar proved the death. He finished his dinner about the time the lions were starting theirs, and, calling Simba to follow, shouldered his rifle and took the trail.

They made a long detour to get downwind, and, having agreed upon the approximate position of the kill, advanced upon it with the utmost caution. It is extremely difficult to find a lion's dinner-party in a stretch of wild country. The voice of the lion, even when not deliberately thrown afar, is confusing to human ears, and there are so many places where a kill may be concealed that it is more than likely that the searcher will blunder upon it when he least expects it. Cloete was well aware of this, and, since his purpose was to view the lions without scaring them, he took every precaution to avoid discovery. In this he was assisted by the numerous hyenas hastening upwind to the kill. The scavengers gave him a wide berth and hurried on, but he was enabled to follow their tracks in the bright starlight, and before long their chucklings and growling told him that he was close to the spot where the lions fed, watched by their jealous satellites.

It was now necessary to approach unobserved by the beasts who had so far acted as his guides. There were about a score of hyenas assembled in the bushes near by, and all of them were gifted with senses of the utmost acuteness.

He could not hope to remain undiscovered by them, but since they were well acquainted with man, and not disposed to be chased away from meat by his presence, he hoped to insinuate himself into their midst without causing them to announce his intrusion to the lions. In this he was partially successful. Accompanied by Simba, he stole forward a foot at a time until within a few yards of the kill.

The hyenas became aware of him, and removed themselves from his vicinity, but without any violent expressions of alarm, so that he was confident that the lions did not hear their low-voiced comments upon his arrival at the feast.

In this he was mistaken. Both Kaspa and his friends knew immediately that a man was near, not only from the actions of the hyenas, but from their own acute sense of hearing, which discovered the whereabouts of some clumsy twig-cracking creature near by and identified him the instant a wandering puff of wind made the circle of the little clearing in which they stood. But Kaspa had no fear of man when darkness enshrouded him. Long immunity had made him contemptuous of this enemy, who, he was convinced, was only to be dreaded in large numbers and in broad daylight.

If some curious man had stolen up on them to pry and and observe, he could join the hyenas as an audience for the feast of the kings of the wilderness, and, like the hyenas, he would be welcome to the leavings. As long as he made no effort to interfere, Kaspa was careless of his presence.

Cloete did not know in what contempt he was held. He was reluctant to advance further for fear of disturbing the lions. It was as well for him that this reluctance existed, for had he approached the kill he would have been attacked by the whole pack.

From the bush beneath which he crouched he could see the dim shape of the dead zebra twenty paces distant, and huge shadowy forms moving about it. The sounds of eating and low purrings and growlings which made the conversation of the lions were distinctly audible to him, but no clear view of any one of the animals could be obtained.

He lay there for an hour, at the end of which he had caught a glimpse of a vague upright form and heard a chuckle that he was convinced had not emanated from a hyena; then, as the chilly dawn breeze came soughing up over the veld and the stars paled, the lions went away, roaring and talking up towards the forest. When they had entirely departed, Cloete went forward to the kill and chased the hyenas from it.

He was cold and weary, having spent most of the night crawling upon hands and knees and lying prone behind bushes, but he was pleased with his discoveries, for he was now convinced that the Bomogo had not lied, and that there was some strange manlike creature abroad upon the veld whose capture meant five hundred pounds in his pocket. He and Simba sat down by the remains of the zebra and waited patiently for dawn.

When it was light enough they commenced their investigations. The kill was reduced to a pile of bones and a few chunks of coarse meat, by which the hunt-

er knew that the lions had been hungry and had fed full. "They will sleep sound enough today," he muttered.

Simba was searching for spoor. He pointed out the tracks of broad human feet, and Cloete whistled. "If his feet are like those of a man, he be a man all over," he said.

Up to now he had scouted the idea that the lion-god might be a human being, inclining to the theory that if such a creature existed it must be a hybrid ape. He was now wondering just what sort of thing he would have to deal with when he set out to capture it.

The tracks led up over the grassy veld, where they became faint and indistinguishable to any but a tracker of Simba's skill. He followed them without difficulty until, at the end of a mile, they dipped into a big donga and led plainly across its dusty surface to the opening of a cave in the further bank. Cloete and his henchman turned back to camp and breakfast.

AS CLOETE had predicted, Kaspa and his friends slept soundly that day. They did not hear the sound of a distant shot nor see a group of natives dragging the carcass of a zebra across the veld near their cave, but when darkness fell and they started out for the nightly hunt they struck the scent of that meat and, directed by curiosity and the anticipation of an easy meal, followed the broad trail. It led to the same grove of trees in which they had eaten the zebra of the previous night. Cloete's preparations for them had been simple. A large net of strong rope was suspended upon four slender posts over the kill. Attached to the posts was a cord, at the other of which was Simba, concealed in a tree.

Kaspa became aware of Simba as soon as he circled this gratuitous meal, but he merely assumed that the man who had visited the feast the night before had returned again. He could see nothing wrong with the tiny clearing or the kill in the center of it. The stretched net seemed to him a tangle of interlacing creepers, and although he wondered that he had not noticed it the previous night, its presence was not alarming. He stepped forward with his long loping stride, uttering a low rallying cry to his pack. As he passed under the net, it collapsed upon him.

The movement of the shadowy object above his head caused him to leap wildly for safety, but he was too late. The clinging folds enveloped him; his thrusting arms and legs pushed through the interstices and were snared; he tipped and rolled upon the ground, fighting silently, and in a moment the net was swathed about him, binding him to immobility.

At last he lay motionless, growling his wrath and fear.

Ruka and Dogo pounced upon one end of the net, tearing and biting at it, but their efforts merely jerked their bound leader about the clearing without liberating him. At length they too desisted and crouched growling beside him, impotent. Kaspa remembered Mua. In just such a way Nguvu had striven to liberate her, until exhausted by his efforts. He was convinced his fate would be that of the lioness, and he broke out into a paroxysm of struggling again. At the end of five minutes neither his efforts nor those of his brothers had benefited him. He lay still, gasping, and considering.

The men who had done this thing were afraid of him. They had never molested him since the affair of the dogs, why then had they entrapped him like this? Perhaps the trap had not been set for him, but for one of his followers. Kaspa recognized that the immunity he had enjoyed was not extended to the true lions. Men sought to be revenged upon the slayers of their cattle, but him they pardoned. He had eaten their beasts within a few yards of them and they had not attempted to harm him, whereas a similar theft upon the part of Ruka or Dogo had produced arrows and bullets.

He began to think that he had been caught by mistake and would not be harmed. With the morning would come the hunters to the number of a hundred and more, and if they were disposed to kill him he could not prevent it. He must abide the issue, but he had no intention of allowing his pack to suffer by his mistake. His brothers must go and leave him to his fate, as Paka and Nguvu had left Mua to her fate.

He communicated his thoughts to the lions, but they would not leave him. Mala, having discovered Simba in the tree, was making determined efforts to knock him out of it, but he was beyond her reach. Dogo went to her assistance, launching his magnificent body in huge leaps at the branch whereon the man crouched, but Simba had chosen his position with care, and he was safe enough. Kaspa tried to impress upon Ruka that he must take the pack away; they would all be killed if they stayed there.

"Remain with me until morning and then go, for the men are too powerful for you by daylight," he grunted. "Remember the attacks we made upon the herds, how the men could not resist us until they had gathered all their people, and then how they killed the two old lions that came up from the thorn country to join us. It is true that old lions killed some of them, but it did not stop them. I tell you if you are here at dawn you will not save me, and will get killed yourselves."

Ruka was of the opinion that he could kill all the men in the district if only he could get his claws upon them. He looked forward to doing so. Mala sided with him. Simba had prodded her with a spear as she jumped at him, and she desired nothing better than to fight it out to a finish. Kaspa reasoned with them. He dreaded that they would be there in the morning to throw themselves uselessly against the spears of the Bomogo. He knew the blind rage to which his people were prone when wounded, and the cunning of the men who took advantage of trees and arrows to defend themselves against the furious frontal attacks of their enemies. The pack gathered about him and listened to his advice. He was their leader, and the habit of obedience was difficult to shake off.

Kaspa began to hope that his counsel would prevail, but the affair was suddenly taken out of his hands.

Simba's shrill whistles, disregarded by the lions, had reached the ears of the waiting hunters, and now they were advancing to scare the lions. The veld became busy with lights and shoutings.

Kaspa saw the bearded face of the white man, lit by the radiance of many lanterns. These people were newcomers, and might not be disposed to treat them with the deference of the Bomogo. He began to struggle again, roaring out to the others to fly and save themselves. Mala and Ruka sprang to meet the men. There was a stunning report and the lioness collapsed in a kicking heap. "Go! go!" roared Kaspa. "Leave them! They will kill you all!"

Ruka pulled up and crouched, snarling. A second shot tore past his ear. He leaped into cover behind a bush.

With shouting and firing of guns the men came on, and the lions, alarmed by Mala's fate, retreated before them. Cloete stood over Kaspa, examining his captive by the light of a lamp, but so thickly was the net wound about the recumbent form that he could distinguish little.

"We've got what we wanted, anyway," he said. "Pick him up and carry him back to camp."

They bound ropes about Kaspa; tied him to a long pole and lifted him up to swing between them. As the procession made its way over the veld the lions followed, roared mournfully. Kaspa uttered one sound as he was borne away. It was the signal for retreat, and reluctantly his brothers obeyed it.

They took him down the river, and there, after having fastened him securely to a tree, left him to his bitter thoughts. He was frightened and bewildered. What was to be done to him he had no idea. His captors had left him still tied up in the net, and had gone away to gather about fires and talk until the morning.

He had suffered all the pangs of helpless rage and fear. To a wild creature, which Kaspa was, it is a frightening experience to be brought into contact with things he does not understand, and to be subjected to treatment in which he can see no profit or purpose. He could not see that men could have any use for him other than to kill him. They had not killed him, therefore why did they not let him go? He lay exhausted and miserable in his bonds, listening to the ripple of the river close by and the faint calling of his brothers out on the veld—a message of love and sympathy, but hopeless as his own thoughts.

WITH morning his captors approached him, untied the ropes which bound him to the tree, and thrust him into a large wooden cage with bars across the front of it.

The bearded man poked a knife through the bars, cut the cords of the net in every direction he could reach to, and stood back to watch Kaspa free himself. When he had done so, the Dutchman looked narrowly at him, and allowed his breath to escape in a long exclamation. *"Allemachtige!"*

He said nothing more. He stood watching the captive for an hour without moving, and Kaspa crouched on the floor of the cage, stared back at him. Then he went off to his breakfast, and his place was taken by a dozen astonished natives.

They brought cooked meat and thrust it in to him, and also a bowl of water. Kaspa did not move; he crouched there glaring at them.

In half an hour Cloete emerged from his tent and roared orders. The camp was struck. Long poles were brought to which the cage was securely fastened; natives

shouldered it, and then the party trekked.

In four days they reached the government post of Nyoka. Kaspa still crouched on the floor of the cage. He had neither eaten nor drunk; he was dying by inches. At every halting-place, Cloete had talked to him and offered him food, but no coaxing would induce him to eat. In desperation Cloete got him to Nyoka and hurried into the office with his tale of woe.

"Mr. Sefton, I have caught that wild man, but he will not eat or drink. He will just snarl at me and die."

Sefton jumped up from his desk. He was a slightly built, fair young man with thin handsome features, and a sensitive mouth. For a moment he stared at the Dutchman incredulously. Then he said, "Where is he?" As yet it did not dawn upon him that Cloete's captive was other than an animal. He had expected the lion-god to turn out some hybrid native-ape. He was interested and eager to examine him.

Cloete led the way to where his men had put the cage down under a tree. Sefton walked up to it and stood staring. He saw something crouching down upon the floor of the box—a man, but such a man! He was enormous! His arms and shoulders bulged with rippling muscle that slid under the skin in time to his breathing. His face was half hidden by a mane of curling yellow hair, but Sefton could see that his brow was broad, his nose straight and his eyes set wide apart. Then he looked into the man's eyes and gasped.

It was the savage yellow orbs of the lion that stared back at him. Kaspa's eyes were a light hazel, and they had that remote brooding expression that can be seen in the eyes of the king of beasts when he lies behind bars and regards his persecutors with contemptuous unfriendly gaze.

The man's skin was a clear olive brown, seamed with the scars of old wounds and scratches.

"My God, this is a white man!" cried Sefton at last.

Cloete was almost weeping. "I know, Mr. Sefton. What can I do with him? He will not drink, and he will surely die."

Sefton thought rapidly. This was a man, and you could not treat him like an animal; at the same time you could not treat him like a normal person. To all intents he was a lunatic, and a savage one at that. One restrained lunatics for their own good, and if necessary fed them forcibly so that they should not starve themselves to death. He felt justified in treating Kaspa like a lunatic.

"We must feed him forcibly," he said decisively. "The man is to be treated like an invalid—some one who is mentally unbalanced. You cannot keep him in a cage like this, Cloete; we must get him up to my house and keep him there."

The Dutchman threw up his hands in a despairing gesture. "But how? Man, he is like a gorilla. If we let him out he will kill the whole lot of us!"

Sefton was forced to recognize the sense of his objection. Kaspa appeared to have the strength and ferocity of a wild beast, endowed with some of man's intelligence. Sefton had never seen anything look quite so dangerous.

"He has a monkey-skin round his waist, with a knife on a thong," he said, peering into the cage. "Surely he must understand some language if he wears native garments?"

Cloete shook his head. "I've tried him all ways, Mr. Sefton; he just like a wild lion —he don't know anything."

Sefton made a decision. "Bring him over to my house. We will board up a window and turn him loose in one of the rooms; he can't get away from there."

There was a spare unfurnished room at the back of the commissioner's bungalow. The window was blocked up with heavy battens of wood, the door strengthened, and Kaspa's cage placed inside. Simba opened the door of the cage and fled for his life; the white men watched from gaps in the window-bars.

Kaspa came out of the cage with a single bound. He ran quickly round the room on noiseless feet, seeking a way of escape, and, finding none, retired to a corner, where he crouched. Sefton had been amazed at his bulk in the cage, he was still more amazed at the sight of him erect and moving. He judged him to be about six feet four, but so broad and thick that he looked shorter. Cloete and the commissioner watched the wild man for some time, but as he made no further move they went off to have tea and discuss the matter further. The result of that discussion was that the Dutchman retired to his camp by the river, leaving Sefton to the task of taming Kaspa.

The young man undertook this with kindliness and understanding. He went to the window and talked to the captive as he would have talked to a restive horse.

Kaspa had now been for some hours in a darkened room, away from the prying eyes of natives. He had taken a liking to Sefton. He was different in appearance

from the people who had captured him, and he had a pleasant voice. Kaspa, like all wild things, was disturbed by jarring noises. In hate and fury he had suffered the degradation of being carried over the veld like a dead buck, stared at by evil-smelling natives. He hated Cloete, who had caught him and killed his friend Mala, and the natives he both hated and despised.

He would accept nothing at their hands. But Sefton was different. He made soft conciliatory noises such as a lion makes to a stranger when he invites him to share his kill. He walked softly, talked softly, and was very ready with smiles.

Kaspa knew what a smile was, although before this he had never seen one. His alert man-brain began to understand that this small, soft-skinned person was a friend, or at least desirous of being friendly. As for Sefton, his astonishment had now turned to an intense admiration for the lion-man.

A lover of art and poetry, he saw in Kaspa the embodiment of beauty and romance. The strength, stature, and supple grace of him were enthralling; the thought of what he had been and how he had lived was romance. Sefton's mode of address became less like that of a man soothing a worried horse, and more like that of a schoolboy talking to an athletic hero.

Kaspa responded by smiling. It was wonderful. Sefton loved him from that moment. It was as though a magnificent maned lion had smiled with all the charm of a beautiful woman.

SEFTON marched straight into the house, seized a jug of milk from the table, and entered the prison, locking the door behind him. It was not until he looked up from his task that he began to be afraid. Kaspa had risen soundlessly to his feet and was watching him. Sefton put the jug down quickly against the wall and prepared to defend himself. For a long moment he stared at the lion-man with fear in his eyes, before he realized that there was no need for his warlike preparations. Kaspa was watching him steadily, but there was no anger in his gaze. Sefton picked up the jug and approached the other, holding it outstretched.

The lion-man reached out an arm like a lion's paw and with a sudden sweep caught him by the wrist. So viselike was that grip that the milk-jug remained upright in the hand that was powerless to move. Sefton made a violent effort to free himself. He was convinced his end was at hand—that in another moment he would be torn limb from limb. The giant caught his other arm, and he was drawn against the massive chest. Kaspa held him motionless and looked down into his eyes. He saw fear and a desperate courage there.

Kaspa smiled and loosened his grip. Sefton expelled his breath in a long sigh as he felt that terrible grasp relax. He steadied himself on trembling legs and proffered the jug in both hands.

"Drink, old man, for God's sake," he said, through dry lips; "you must be famished."

The trite words amused him, and he laughed shakily. Kaspa discovered an unexpected pleasure in that sound. He knew what laughter was, and knew that it indicated pleasure. If this man was pleased with him, it was a comforting thought.

He took the milk-jug, peered into it, and drank. He had never tasted milk before, within his memory, and he found it pleasant. He had been four days without water, nothing very terrible for him, but uncomfortable, certainly. He emptied the jug, opened his fingers and dropped it to the floor, where it smashed into three pieces.

"Great Scott! Don't break the crockery!" cried Sefton. He laughed hugely at the wild man's indifference to the fate of the jug once he had done with it. Kaspa laughed with him—a low peal of merriment that rang like a bell in the closed room. Sefton hurried to the door.

"Now wait there, old chap," he said. "I'm going to bring you some food. I can't have a guest in my house with an empty tummy." He disappeared through the door, and Kaspa watched him curiously. This man was certainly different from any one he had seen before. The continual chattering sounds he made were strangely familiar. For instance, one expression, "old chap," stirred vague memories in the lion-man's mind, memories which he could not capture but which seemed oddly connected with dreams. He revolved these dreams in his mind.

When Sefton reappeared at the door with a loaded tray in his hands, he said to him, "Mummy!" Sefton nearly dropped the tray. "Good God!" he whispered, and then, "Oh, I say, my poor old chap! What an awful business!"

He set the tray down on the floor, shaking his head sorrowfully. It had suddenly occurred to him that Kaspa was a man like himself—but an adult man, with the mind

of a child. He watched Kaspa take the meat and bread off the tray and eat it, much as a monkey would have done.

"Dear, dear," he muttered, "we must do something about this; poor fellow knows nothing—hopelessly unsophisticated."

It was characteristic that Kaspa's condition was brought home to him more by his lack of table manners than by the fact of his total ignorance of any known tongue.

He made several trips to the kitchen before the lion-man's appetite was satisfied. Then he sat down by him and tried to make him talk. His efforts were frustrated by Kaspa curling himself up on the ground and falling asleep. Sefton fetched a rug to throw over him, then he locked the door of the room and set off over the veld to Cloete's camp.

HE FOUND the Dutchman about to start his dinner. Sefton explained that he had made friends with Kaspa and had induced him to eat and drink. Cloete was delighted.

"Now that he is tame it will be easy!" he cried. "I will telegraph for a lorry to come up from Chola, and then we just put him on and take him to the coast and ship him to Canada."

"But how?" Sefton objected. "You can't ship a perfectly sane white man to Canada in a crate, and if you let him travel like a passenger he will act like an anthropoid ape at a party. What does this man Horton want to do with him?"

Cloete did not know. Horton had offered five hundred pounds for the capture of the lion-man and his shipment to Montreal. Cloete was obeying instructions; he accepted no responsibility.

"Well, you can't ship him in a cage, that's final," declared the commissioner. "I'll see what I can do to civilize him before the lorry gets here. If I don't succeed in inducing him to go of his own free will, he stops here. You have no right to lay forcible hands upon his person than you have to catch a Bomogo and ship him off to Canada in a box."

"All right, Mr. Sefton," said Cloete submissively.

Sefton went back to his own dinner, thinking hard. He had taken a violent fancy to Kaspa. It seemed to him quite certain that no one would be able to handle the lion-man as well as he could. The thought of training and educating a mind so plastic as that of the wild man was most intriguing—"and imagine what a friend to have; what noble instincts to implant and the fruit to be reaped from them when they had matured in the soil of thought and knowledge! Imagine sitting talking to man who had lived the first twenty years of his life as a wild lion!".

Sefton could not bear to miss these things, but he hardly saw how he was to prevent Kaspa being taken away from him. He had no money other than his pay and the small sum he had saved up for his leave, due in another month. This man Horton could find Kaspa's friends, or perhaps parents, for there was no doubt in the commissioner's mind that the wild man had once been a European child stolen away from its kin at an early age. Horton was reputed wealthy, and he could do more for a protégé than a penniless government official in an up-country station. He supposed it was to Kaspa's interest that he should go to Canada, but Sefton was hanged if he was going to let him be carted about like a wild animal. He would devote his best efforts to training the lion-man in the week before the lorry arrived, and if necessary he would accompany his charge to the coast—he could take that amount of time off, anyway.

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The next morning, after he had given Kaspa his breakfast and spent an hour trying to talk to him, he had another thought. He went into his office and sent off two telegrams. The first was to Loudon Grant, and read:

> Accept my resignation take effect immediately. Send successor at once.

The second was to James Horton at the offices of the *Canadian Observer:*

> Your specimen obtained. No animal, but white man. Ship Montreal absurd, as free citizen. Am bringing personally by first available ship.

He signed this *Commissioner Nyoka,* and had no doubt that Horton would understand what had happened. Having given the messages to his clerk with instructions to rush them, he went back to Kaspa and proceeded to inform him of his action.

"I've chucked it all up, old man, the work of years; but I'm not sorry. I'd rather go with you out into the world than stay here safe and comfortable, any day. Supposing I can find your people, perhaps they will get me a job somewhere, and supposing I can't, by gad, we'll go on the vaudeville stage together and make pots of money breaking horseshoes and throwing cannon balls about."

Kaspa looked at him and smiled. He did not understand a word of it, but he knew that Sefton loved him, even as Ruka and Dogo did.

CHAPTER V

THE MARLEYS

THE introduction of Kaspa to his benefactor upset most of the journalist's preconceived ideas. He had gone to meet the ship at Montreal filled with curiosity to see this extraordinary person whom the young government official had become so enamored of that he had ruined his prospects to take charge of him. For Sefton had sent another and more explicit cable from the coast in which he had exposed his hand to the perspicacious Horton.

The journalist reflected that when he had made arrangements for the capture of the wild man he had not bargained for a champion such as Martin Sefton, who had intimated decisively that Kaspa must not be exploited for the requirements of sensational journalism. To give Horton his due, he was by no means callous and unsympathetic, and a lifetime of disillusionment had not entirely eradicated all the romance from his nature.

His desire to exhibit Kaspa to the public as an animal had given place to the hope that he might exhibit the public to him as his fellow men and women. His interest had veered from the many to the one. James Horton, who had lived by publicity, was beginning to find pleasure in secrecy.

Having pondered the matter at length, he had decided to keep this business as quiet as possible. To a few intimates, notably Mrs. Marley, who could be depended upon to understand his motives, he had confided the incredible truth, but not a journalist knew anything about the arrival of the wild man, and Horton had slunk off by himself to meet him and learn at first hand whether Sefton's description of the "splendid character" was truthful.

Within two minutes of setting eyes on Kaspa he decided that Sefton had not exaggerated. A typical product of modern civilization, the journalist could not be expected to realize the charm of an entirely natural personality, but he admired the lion-man's amazing physique, appreciated the keeness of his intelligence, and above all sympathized with his predicament.

Sefton had managed things artfully. He had procured a wardrobe for his friend from an Indian trader at Chola, and during the voyage had contrived to keep Kaspa in his cabin, except at night, when the deck hands had been astonished at the sight of a huge tawny figure pacing the deck in company with the pleasant-mannered young man who was his keeper, for Sefton had shamelessly hinted that his charge was traveling for his mental health.

Kaspa had taken all this in good part. He had become very fond of Sefton, and the astonishing experiences to which he had been subjected since leaving his wild African home had scared him so much that he was ready to obey orders without question. He was nervous of people, so that confinement in the cabin seemed to him a lesser evil than the conviviality of the decks. He had been seasick for the first few days of the voyage, which had rendered Sefton's task easier.

What the passengers thought of him Sefton neither knew nor cared. It was a cargo ship, luckily, and there were few people traveling. Such as asked questions were told lies. Sefton had no scruples in protecting his friend from the morbid curiosity of idle folk.

The stewards undoubtedly thought Kaspa some sort of lunatic, and were afraid of him. He had a habit of yawning hugely, and stretching like a cat, and the sight of those strong white teeth and bulging muscles was horrifying in the confined space of the cabin.

The captin was told a half-truth that aroused his sympathies and interest. He understood that Kaspa had been kidnapped when a child and brought up among savages. This, and the fact that he was undeveloped mentally, accounted for his curious appearance and disinclination to speak even the barbarous tongue of his captors, for Kaspa never uttered a word to any one but Sefton, and those were words he was being taught like an infant.

Like a captive lion, he suffered his fate apathetically. The impossibility of escape from this prison of the ship was apparent; there was nothing to do but wait and see what happened, which he undertook with the patience of an animal. His affection for Sefton increased hourly. The young Englishman was always with him, always sedulous for his comfort of mind and body. After his bout of seasickness Kaspa began to take interest in the things about him. He was utterly bewildered, but supremely conscious of one fact: he was a man like these others, and must learn the habits of men as a cub learned the law of the lion pack.

Human speech was difficult for him at first, but with constant practice it became easier, and by the time the voyage ended the repetition of certain words after his teacher had taught him their meanings. He knew the names of a number of things, and could reply in monosyllables to simple questions as to the welfare of his body and mind.

One question Sefton often asked: "Are you happy, old man?" to which Kaspa invariably returned an affirmative, but, truth to tell, he did not know what happiness meant.

He supposed it to consist of the absence of the sensations of pain and hunger. It had no connection with mental pleasure evidently, for how could he be content away from the freedom of the veld, and the independence of his lion life? He was as unhappy as a captive animal, but like a captive animal he made no complaint. The evils of life were unavoidable; they must be suffered, like illness or wounds. So Sefton had Kaspa's body and was taking it to Canada; his spirit remained in Africa among the lions.

He grew steadily thinner and more thoughtful. That, thought Sefton, was unavoidable on the ship. Once they got ashore he would soon buck up and begin to take an interest in his surroundings, but his observation of the lion-man's character convinced him that Kaspa's transformation from animal to man must be gradual. There must be no confinement in cities; he should have the freedom and quiet of the countryside in which to find himself and readjust his mental state.

WHEN Horton came aboard at Montreal, Sefton was waiting for him on deck. The two men liked each other at sight. Sefton's eager, enthusiastic manner and straightforward countenance was an indication of his nature, and the journalist with his keen, intelligent face and brisk air of efficiency seemed to Sefton just the man capable of handling this worrying business.

"I got your cable," said Horton after a handshake. He glanced round the deck, crowded with passengers and their luggage and friends. "Where is he?"

"In the cabin. I have kept him there most of the voyage." Sefton led the way amongst the jostling throng, Horton talking rapidly as he pushed after him.

"How about passports and so on? How did you manage it?"

"I concocted a story," said Sefton nervously. "There was only one way to do it: make him a Portuguese from over the border. I know some of the Portuguese officials—I managed to work it. He is booked as Pedro da Costa."

Horton laughed. "That doesn't sound right, somehow. Anyway, I know the immigration officer; he must be told the truth, more or less, but I don't think there will be any trouble."

Sefton threw open the cabin door and presented Kaspa. The lion-man was looking out of the porthole; he turned and blinked amiably at the stranger.

"My God!" said Horton as he saw his face. He looked steadily at Kaspa for nearly a minute, while Sefton moved uneasily about the cabin searching for odds and ends that he knew were already packed.

Presently he heard the Canadian say, "It seems like I'm dreaming, but I guess I'm not. I guess I've made a remarkable discovery." He laughed suddenly, stepped forward and gripped Kaspa by the arm. "Well, boy!" he said kindly.

"Look out!" cried Sefton, springing forward, but his fears were needless. Kaspa

had taken the journalist by both shoulders and was holding him like a wax figure, looking into his eyes and smiling.

"If your name's not Kaspa, I'm a Dutchman," said Horton, unafraid, and very excited.

Kaspa's smile grew broader. "Karsepah!" he repeated after the other. It was the language of lions, and it pleased him.

Horton grinned at Sefton. "Come on, let's get out of here. I've got something to tell you that will make your eyes pop. Say, this is a happy day for all of us! Where are those stewards?" He darted out of the door and presently returned with a steward and a couple of shore porters.

The three of them made their way into the saloon, where Horton engaged in a brief but earnest conversation with a uniformed official. The man agreed to Horton's proposals.

"Mind, you'll be responsible, Mr. Horton," he said as he stamped Kaspa's passport.

"You know me; I shan't run away," replied the journalist. He piloted Kaspa out on to the deck, a free Canadian citizen.

They stood about in the customs shed while the traveler's luggage passed scrutiny. Many curious, and some admiring, glances were cast at the huge figure of the lion-man, who was slightly ungainly in his badly fitting flannel suit.

Kaspa stood with Sefton beside him, taking it all in: the rush and bustle of hundreds of busy people, the sight of trucks shunting past the shed doors, and the chatter of many voices. Sefton saw that he was trembling slightly, like a startled horse.

"That's fixed," said Horton at last, summoning with beckoning hand a couple of longshoremen to shoulder the trunks.

"These had better go by train. Get your grips and bring them out to my car. I guess we'll go to a hotel first, where we can have a talk, then I thought about going to a country house of mine where things will be quiet for our friend here."

They followed him, and in a few minutes were driving through the crowded streets of Montreal. Kaspa sat looking out at the traffic and the busy shops. He was still trembling, and his eyes had a dazed, frightened expression. Sefton watched him anxiously, patting his shoulder and uttering consoling sounds as he had done many times in the course of that dreadful journey from Nyoka, with all its trials and excitements, now culminating in this terrifying experience.

Kaspa had become used to motor cars in his journey down to the coast; it was the noise and continual movement that worried him. He felt as though he were undergoing a bad dream from which he would presently awake to find the silent veld all about him. He had experienced curious dreams at times and had never been able to understand them.

Horton was also silent, turning something over in his mind. Arrived at the hotel, he passed immediately to the room he had engaged.

"Now then," he said briskly to Sefton, "order what you like and let's get to business. I've got a lot to say to you."

The waiter departed to bring tea, and as soon as they were alone Horton began. Kaspa sat in an easy-chair, lost in a reverie, throughout this conversation. He was mentally tired and indifferent to anything except physical danger, and there was little likelihood of that as far as he could tell.

"I will tell you something about myself first," said Horton; "it is necessary to your understanding of my news. I want you to know that I exercise some influence in this country. I came here from Vermont with Denison Starke, the millionaire, twelve years ago. Starke was a real estate man. He invested heavily in Ontario land and made big money. He was also a newspaperman. He owned the *Pioneer* in Vermont, and he bought the *Outlook* here, which is where I came in, for he imported me to run that paper.

"Starke died five years ago. He left a sister, Mrs. Johnson Marley, who is my good friend, and it was his conviction that he left a grandson, though most of us thought it unlikely. It happened this way. He had one son, Christopher George, who did not take after him.

"Christopher disapproved of his father's business methods—for that matter he disapproved of business altogether—and when he grew up he took orders, and afterward became a missionary. He was sent to some station in the wilds of Africa, and there he married a Danish girl, also a missionary. They had a son called Kaspa.

"Old Denison Starke's health began to fail, and he wanted his son back again. He sent Andrew Gale, his confidential secretary, to Africa to find Christopher and induce him to return with him. Gale managed it, but on the way back to civilization the whole party was attacked and murdered by a tribe called the Bakakuta. The only survivor was an Arab who had been

with Christopher Starke for many years; he made his escape with the child.

"AFTER he reached the coast he told a story of having wandered for days in the wilderness, starving and thirsty, before he fell in with a party of traders and was brought by them to Chola. He said that the night of the raid he had run off into the bush and hidden, but after the natives had departed with the loot of the caravan he had returned to investigate. He found every one dead but the child, who was hidden under some grass. One supposed his wretched mother concealed him there with her last strength.

Abadalla took the child and started off into the bush, but before long he lay down to sleep and to wait for the morning to light his way. He said he woke up and found the child gone. He looked for it, but there were lions all around him and he got frightened and ran away.

"An expedition was despatched to search for the bodies and to learn the child's fate, but although they found evidences of the raid and the murder of the Europeans, they learned nothing of the child."

Sefton sat staring at the journalist. "What do you suggest?" he said softly. "Surely you don't think. . ." His voice died away into a silence of astonishment.

"Let me continue," said Horton, waving aside the interruption. "Starke was never convinced of the child's death. He got a bit foolish towards the end of his life, got monkeying with spiritualism and so on, and he liked to think that his grandson was living as the captive of the natives, or some such thing, and would one day come to light again. There was a mint of money spent upon search among the tribes in that part of Africa. Starke was too old to go himself, but he sent others, and it was always his opinion that they didn't earn their money." He brought his hand softly down on the table with a gesture of finality.

"Now I'm sure of it, for that boy is the image of Denison Starke when I first knew him." The dramatic gesture in Kaspa's direction aroused his interest; he smiled at the beaming journalist.

Sefton spoke dully: "It seems like fate."

"What, that I should go traveling around and hear about this lion-man?" said Horton. "Perhaps so—perhaps sheer luck," he added thoughtfully.

"Then if Kaspa is Denison Starke's grandson, he is a rich man?"

"Ah, if," Horton cautioned. "There you have it. Of course, we may be able to prove it. There is the native, Abdalla, who can be found, and there is the extraordinary likeness. Starke looked like a lion, and he was built a little like this boy."

The Journalist produced cigars from his pocket, offered one to Sefton and lit another himself.

"There will be opposition, mind you," he warned. "Starke left all his money to his sister, Mrs. Marley, but he made conditions. She was to search for his grandson, and if she found him they went halves, but if some one else produced him, or he turned up on his own, he took the whole pile except a hundred thousand dollars."

"So Mrs. Marley will contest the claim," said Sefton quickly, up in arms over his friend's interests.

"Most probably not; she's a white woman," Horton replied. "I guess she'll be as pleased as any one to see a lost Starke come to light again. It isn't her I'm worrying about, but her stepchildren. Marley was a widower when he married her. He had a son and a daughter, Lucian and Shelia. It's them that'll make trouble."

"But what have they to do with it? They are not even related to Denison Starke," cried Sefton indignantly.

Horton shook his head slowly. "Denison willed his money right through, you see. The children are Mrs. Marley's heirs in equal shares." He sat up, blowing a cloud of smoke. "Anyway, we don't need to worry about that yet," he said briskly. "We're not even sure that this is the right man; that'll be for me to see to. What we have to do is to decide on Kaspa's future. We've got him here; now what are we going to do with him?"

"I thought I might be able to take him out into the country somewhere and teach him," said Sefton diffidently. "You know he can't stand a lot of fuss and bother at present; it drives him frantic. I must get him to somewhere quiet, and teach him gradually."

Horton looked at him curiously. "You're a good friend to have, aren't you? You've thrown up your job for this fellow and now you're willing to bury yourself in the country and play nurse to him. I wouldn't like the job."

Sefton flushed. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell Horton that it was a good thing somebody had the decency to take care of the man Cloete had captured and treated like a wild beast, but he refrained.

After all, Horton was making amends for his past thoughtlessness.

"I made a few plans before you arrived," the journalist cut in upon his turbulent thoughts. "I've got a country house at a place called Port Perry, right out in the woods of Ontario; I bought it from Starke. It was my idea that we might go there by car. It will take a couple of days or so from here, but we can sleep at night on the road. You don't want to take Kaspa in a train, I suppose?"

Sefton did not, and said so emphatically.

"It's my opinion we ought to keep this thing quiet for a while," Horton went on. "Give me a month or two and I may be able to prove our friend's identity; meanwhile there's no sense in making a nine-days wonder of him. He wouldn't like it, and neither would you."

Sefton agreed fervently. He had been terribly afraid of publicity; he knew something of the methods of modern journalism, and he visualized the ordeal to which Kaspa and he would be subjected did Horton propose to bring them to public notice.

"You must give him a chance," he pleaded. "You don't know what it must be like to him. Just let us get away into the woods somewhere. I'll undertake to teach him enough to make him presentable if you'll give me time."

"I think that's the most sensible plan," Horton agreed. "You'll be all right at Honeydale—not a farm within miles of you. Let's say six months, eh? I won't tell a soul before then, and you'll be left in peace."

Sefton was grateful for this respite, but required more time.

Horton suddenly gave an exclamation; he had thought of something that worried him for a moment, but his active brain soon settled the problem, and he continued outlining his plan for Kaspa's education.

"I just thought about the winter," he explained. "Twenty below zero would about kill our friend, I guess. You'll just have to get him fit to travel by fall, and I'll find a place for you in California or Florida or somewhere. Do you think you can manage that?"

"I'll try," said Sefton. "I have four months, haven't I? If he progresses at his present rate we should be able to travel without creating a sensation." He paused, and then added nervously, "I haven't any funds, you know."

"Don't worry; I'm a rich man," said Horton. "There'll be an allowance for expenses and a salary for you, of course. I'll write you about that later."

Sefton began to thank him, but the journalist interrupted him.

"I started this thing, and I guess it's up to me. Now let's have some food and get going. What does he eat?" He jerked his head at Kaspa. The wild man had fallen asleep in his chair. The monotony of a conversation which he did not understand and the absence of anything to engage his attention had induced him to employ the animal's refuge from boredom; he slept quietly and lightly, but none the less peacefully.

"Well, if that doesn't beat creation!" said Horton, regarding the huge recumbent figure. "Seems as if he's the least upset of the three of us. What it is to have an unspoiled nervous system!"

But, despite his admiration for Kaspa's serenity, he directed Sefton to wake him, for they must eat and push on with their journey.

"Do you want to see how a lion sleeps?" said Sefton, smiling.

He hissed sharply, like a snake, and instantly Kaspa's tawny eyes opened, watchful and alert.

"Food," said Sefton, moving his jaws as though masticating. Kaspa smiled and yawned, stretching enormous arms and shoulders.

"Say, you want to be careful of him," said Horton seriously. "If he ever gets mad, what on earth will you do?"

"He won't," Sefton replied confidently. "He is the dearest fellow—he wouldn't hurt a fly."

"I bet he would, if it stung him," Horton said. "Well, I'm going to order lots of roast beef for him; that ought to keep him quiet on the journey."

KASPA and Sefton took up their residence at Honeydale on the wooded shores of Lake Scugog. It was a long low house in the Colonial style, standing in fifty acres of ground. Government forest hemmed it in on three sides, and the place was as wild as even Kaspa could wish.

A man and wife named Wiggins cared for their wants. They had both been in the service of Denison Starke, and Horton had told them enough to make them both helpful and discreet.

Here Kaspa proceeded to learn the ways of men under Sefton's painstaking tuition. A keen intellect and a retentive memory helped him. The freedom of his life and

the peace of his surroundings repaired the harm that the long journey from Africa had done, and within a week or two he was his old virile self, curious and adaptable, prying and seeking into everything he did not understand.

Sefton was astonished at his receptiveness. It had not occurred to him before how quick-witted and observant the creatures of the wilderness must be, but contact with Kaspa soon convinced him that a training wherein a false step or neglect of the simplest sign may mean injury and death, makes light of the difficulties of learning.

Within two months Kaspa could talk; within four he could read slowly and uncertainly from children's books. It was like a mature intelligence learning a foreign language. The progress, at first slow, became increasingly rapid, until Sefton was obliged to check his pupil's forward strides lest he should run without having thoroughly mastered the slower but more useful form of locomotion.

Kaspa's studies were assisted by his recreation. He swam miles in the lake every day; he learned to play tennis, after a fashion, and to hit a punchball, but his chief amusement was wandering in the woods clad in a bathing suit. They were not as his own forests, and the animals they contained were strange to him, but he soon began to learn the habits of these.

Sefton had provided him with a bed out on the veranda, to which he retired dutifully at night, but his tutor did not know how often he awoke and stole out among the trees to run naked in the moonlight. He had a habit of sleeping at odd times. Whenever there was nothing better to do, Kaspa slept, even if it were only for five minutes, and thus it was that his nocturnal excursions had no effect upon his daytime efficiency.

The Wigginses treated him with the respect due to one who bore such striking resemblance to their dead master, and with an affection begotton of Kaspa's own lovable nature and amiable ways. He had the calm nerves and patient character of a lion, but he also had that animal's dislike of interference, and goodly proportion of its strength and ferocity.

No one at Honeydale suspected these things of Kaspa, for he was never commanded to do what he did not like, and no one was foolhardy enough to incur his wrath.

Sefton controlled him purely by kindness. Kaspa's love for his friend obliged him to refrain from hurting him, and Sefton was easily hurt by anything which thwarted his self-imposed task of civilizing the lion-man. When Kaspa forgot a lesson or showed disinclination to learn one it was Sefton's grief at these delinquencies that made him redouble his efforts.

The enthusiasm of the tutor for his pupil's prograss was the greatest stimulus of it, for Kaspa's interest gradually abated with his enlightenment. Since first he began to understand the purpose of these studies and his own status in society he had perceived that only his ignorance of civilization stood between him and the life he loved.

Once let him know as much as his friend, or a tithe of it, and he was free to go where he listed without let or hindrance; he was an adult and his own master.

But as the months crept by and the old life of veld and thorn dropped further behind him he began to wonder if this civilizing process would benefit him in the end.

The more human he became the less fitted was he to return to the life of an animal. Ruka and Dogo, the cave in the hills, and the nightly hunts under the huge African moon, seemed very far away in those days.

Then came Horton's news that Kaspa was indeed the son of Christopher Starke, and the possessor of four million dollars.

The native Abdalla had been brought from Africa. Kaspa appeared in a court of law and was recognized by birthmarks and his undoubted likeness to his grandfather.

The papers were full of his romantic story. Reporters and sensation-seekers besieged Honeydale, and applications for interviews were daily received from scientists and Society idlers. Sefton and Kaspa, under assumed names, booked passage for Florida to hide themselves on a citrus farm near Miami, but before they went Kaspa was taken to Rosewood, the home of Mrs. Marley, to be introduced to his relatives. Rosewood, which was now Kaspa's property, was a large white house supported by columns and balconies. It was on the northern outskirts of the city, and possessed a quantity of ground laid out in rose gardens and terraces.

Here lived Mrs. Johnson Marley, her two step-children, and Madeline Moore, the orphan daughter of her husband's friend. The old lady was white-haired and wrinkled, but by no means infirm. Her mornings were spent in the care of her roses,

and her evenings in the cultivation of those friendships which had survived, like fragrant memories, the passing of the years. In appearance stern, she was in reality soft-hearted. With the sound common sense of her ancestry, that of the New England pioneers, she possessed a share of their sentimentality, so that Kaspa was received not as an intruder but rather as a prodigal returned to the flock.

She had pity for his upbringing and admiration for his ability to overcome it. Above all, she gloried in the preservation of the true Starke breed, for the old lady was proud of her family, of which Kaspa was now the sole male representative. Lucian, in whom no Starke blood ran, was a disappointment to her. The young man was pleasant-mannered and good-natured, but there was a strain of selfishness in him, the result of too much license and too little hardship in his upbringing.

He did no work, and was fond of the company of the fashionable youth of Toronto, who, like himself, were endowed with riches in excess of their intelligence.

Sheila, his sister, was also of this set, but she had more strength of character than Lucian, though possibly an even greater conceit of herself, for she had looks as well as money and position.

She was a golden blonde, slight and petite, with a small round face and large blue eyes in keeping with her curls.

She affected to take nothing seriously, and this refusal to recognize the importance of gravity, beginning as a pose, had developed into a habit, so that not even the intrusion of Kaspa had cast a shadow upon the sparkling current of her existence.

MADELINE MOORE, Mrs. Marley's paid companion, was of a different type, both physically and mentally. Tall and lithe, she possessed a figure such as the Greeks loved to perpetuate in marble. She had brown curly hair, which she wore bobbed, and which seldom appeared tidy, large deep blue eyes, and perfect teeth. Her countenance being symmetrical and her forehead broad, there was nothing wanting to her charm.

Madeline had been a society débutante before her father's financial failure and subsequent death. She had been a more popular member of Sheila's own set, and the change from patron to dependent had not left many of her illusions intact. The tragedy of her father's death and the change in her own fortunes had cast a veil of sadness over her once boisterous gayety. Her friends considered that she was more charmingly pathetic than gay.

The fifth member of the party was Harland Reeves, a stockbroker by profession, and Sheila's fiancé. He was a big-built, muscularly powerful man, and had been a successful boxer at school and in the Army. The consciousness of his ability to back up an insult or to resent one had given him a slightly insolent, too self-assured manner, which men found objectionable but women rather admired, since it was never exercised upon them. Reeves was considered a good business-man and not a bad fellow, once you got to know him. He had great influence over the headstrong Sheila, who found in him the only man who could control her, and therefore respected and loved him for his sterner qualities.

Into this company came the reluctant Kaspa, accompanied by his sponsors, Horton and Sefton. He found it all foolish and unnecessary. The light, exaggerated manner of Sheila, who was given to saying frivolous things with disproportionate emphasis, and serious things with flippancy, bewildered him completely. Mrs. Marley's watchful consideration, and Madeline's interested regard, were alike embarrassing to him.

He who had never been nervous in his wild life had acquired self-consciousness with the rudiments of culture.

He felt awkward and foolish, unable to understand most of what was said, and handicapped by his inability to reply to their questions except after careful selection and arrangement of his scanty vocabulary. Sheila could never wait for him to speak; she was as restless as a bird, and must always be changing the subject to something entirely different. It was very difficult for him.

Sefton was nervous, and annoyed by his pupil's predicament. He thought it the height of folly to bring a man like Kaspa into contact with these silly, artificial people and then he discovered upon examination that only two out of the five could be truthfully described in these terms.

Sheila and her brother were the noisy, vapid ones, Reeves had nothing to say, and Mrs. Marley and Madeline were sympathetic and intrigued by the character about whom they had heard so much. Sefton liked the dark girl who watched Kaspa so kindly and gravely; she was also a beauty—very much so.

"They see the magic in every shooting star."

Before long he was studying Madeline as closely as she studied Kaspa.

The lion-man was not at his best. The drawing-room at Rosewood was a low-ceilinged room; the windows were shut, because Mrs. Marley disliked draughts, and Kaspa received the general impression that he was shut up in an airtight box with a lot of gibbering monkeys.

Lions are grave restful beasts; they are not given to useless talk or excitable movements. To Kaspa, sitting in all his bulkiness on a small chair that threatened at any moment to collapse beneath him, it was like being in another world. They all talked in turn, and as far as he could see no one listened to any one else. It says much for the force of Sheila's personality that she was able to convey this impression by her own almost unaided efforts. She said things totally beyond his comprehension. He had no means of knowing that this exchange of small talk had been agreed upon before for his benefit, so that he should not be embarrassed and made to feel himself the object of curiosity.

Sefton's teaching had given Kaspa the idea that it was disgraceful to be a lion. He directed all his energies to trying to behave like a man, and became a shy, unnatural person in consequence.

Sheila was frankly bored with him. She had little interest in events, but much in people. Kaspa's history did not attract her. She had small conception of any life outside her own sphere of activity. The personality of this son of the wilderness should have provided new sensations, but in place of the wild, magnificent person she had expected, she found a very large, very diffident young man with an inferiority complex. She would have been better pleased by a cannibal chief.

After a time even Horton began to wish that he had waited until Kaspa's education was further advanced before bringing him in contact with these worldly people. He acceded to Sefton's unspoken request and, pleading the necessity of preparing for the Florida journey, extricated himself and his two friends.

"Not very successful, I'm afraid," he said softly to Sefton as they walked down the drive to their car.

"What can you expect? Society chit-chat is not the atmosphere for a man who has dealt with stark reality all his life," was the savage reply. "Now they've seen him, I hope they never want to see him again."

Horton grinned. "Oh, well, he'll soon learn how to mix with people," he said. "I wanted him to have a talk with Agatha, but that can come later." Agatha was Mrs. Marley. "She is an understanding woman and a good sort."

"The only understanding person in the crowd, I should imagine," said Sefton, but he was thinking that the dark girl who said little was the one who understood most.

Meanwhile the Marley's were discussing their guest.

"What do you think of him?" said Lucian when the door had closed.

Sheila hastened to give her opinion. "Stupid, I thought. He didn't seem to have a word to say for himself; just sat there like a big Newfoundland dog, wagging his tail and grinning."

Reeves was amused. "You can't expect much else of a man reared like a savage," he pointed out.

Mrs. Marley nodded her head. "Give him a chance. He is a Starke, and he will come into his own, you'll see."

Lucian sniggered. "He's come into it already. It does seem tough that such a fellow inherits a fortune when there are so many others who could make better use of it."

Madeline gave him an indignant glance, which amused Sheila.

"Hello! He's got a champion in Madge, anyway!" she cried maliciously. "Were you smitten with his charms, dear?"

The dark girl flushed. "I think he is a magnificent-looking man," she said quietly, "and perhaps he has more brains than you think. It seems incredible that six months ago he was no better than an animal."

"He looks rather like an overfed prize-fighter, in his clothes," said Reeves thoughtfully, "but you never know how a man will strip. He's tall enough—made me feel like a dwarf." He glanced down at his own six feet of height with approval. He had attempted to weigh up Kaspa from the viewpoint of his ruling passion, but considered that he was a more useful heavyweight than the lion-man despite his inferiority of stature. "It isn't always size that counts," he murmured.

Sheila began to talk about amateur theatricals in which she was taking part. The subject of Kaspa had become tiresome to her. Months before, when Horton had told them about him, she had been thrilled, but the novelty had worn off.

Madeline took no part in the ensuing conversation; she was trying to remember

all she had heard about lions and their ways.

She was the only one of them who realized the stupendous fact that they had entertained a wild African lion who could talk and act like a man.

She had been fascinated by his curious tawny eyes. True, he had kept them hidden in the dim light of the room, but she had obtained one glimpse of them when the lion-man's watchful gaze flickered over her. They were full of strange yellow lights and flashes of expression to which she was unaccustomed.

In the following months Madeline read all the books about lions she could obtain; and by the time she had read a few of them her interest in Kaspa had become absorbing; but Kaspa had almost forgotten her existence.

CHAPTER VI

KASPA AND MADELINE

IT WAS two years before Kaspa and Sefton returned to Honeydale. They had found sanctuary on a farm that Horton had rented for them, and there, where no one knew Kaspa or his history, Sefton was able to devote all his time to his friend's education.

Their change of plans had been occasioned by Horton's discovery that the lion-man's return to Canada was being eagerly awaited by many people who, either from idle curiosity or a genuine desire for knowledge, wished to make his acquaintance.

After the fiasco at Rosewood he had no wish to introduce his protégé to the polite world before his education was completed. The change had done Kaspa good. He enjoyed the climate, which was not unlike that of his own land, and under Sefton's sympathetic tuition he had made great strides and obtained a clearer insight into the ways of men and cities.

They had paid some visits to Miami, where Kaspa had overcome his fear of traffic and learned the value of money and the manner of its use. He still talked without artifice, and was frequently puzzled by his environment, but his first feeling of inferiority had given place to the realization that his own intuitive thoughts and aspirations were more admirable than those of the majority.

He felt that civilization was tawdry and unsatisfying, that men with all their advantages of learning had only succeeded in making themselves unhappy and discontented. Even Sefton was tainted with the same general unrest. He was not quite content with things as they were, but was always worrying himself about trying to improve them. To Kaspa, accustomed to the carefree content of animals, this was astonishing.

One did not suffer, there was plenty to eat, the sun shone and birds sang. What more could man desire? Something beyond his reach, apparently. There was nothing beyond Kaspa's reach, for even his passion for Africa would be gratified one day. He had promised Sefton that he would stay in Canada until he was suitably trained; after that he was his own master and could go where he liked.

Horton was convinced that when that day came Kaspa would be most disinclined to forsake the comforts and pleasures of civilization for the frugal fare and stern joys of the wilderness. And though Sefton did not entirely share these views, he considered it impossible for his friend to revert to the state of savagery from which he had rescued him.

Kaspa would return to Africa, he felt sure, but it would be as a leisured traveler or settler, not as the leader of a lion pack. Meanwhile, Kaspa pleased his tutor by learning diligently the tasks set him, and the more he knew of men the more he pitied them for the foolish lives they led.

It was therefore a changed Kaspa who returned to Honeydale; he had recaptured his self-confidence and the masterful spirit that had enabled him to overcome the perils of the wilderness.

The Marleys soon heard of his return. Madeline had almost forgotten him during his long absence, but the realization that the wild man was once more within reach awakened her old interest. She felt she must meet him again and try to learn something from him.

The sham and monotony of the life she led were becoming increasingly distasteful. Here was some one who had been in actual contact with the real and vital things; she wished to know what that was like. Always of an adventurous spirit, she had long contemplated breaking away from the ordered existence, the dull routine of her life at Rosewood, and transporting herself to a new environment.

She had dallied with the idea of earning her own living, but common sense told her that to exchange the silken chains of her present bondage for the daily toil and meager comfort of a working girl would

be no advantage. It seemed probable that happiness was only to be found in contact with nature. The slow, unhurried progress of a life ordered by the necessities of eating and drinking, and ruled by the gradual changing of the seasons, offered a peace of the spirit more attractive than ease of body and distraction of thought.

Mrs. Marley was good to her, her duties were not onerous, and she shared with Sheila the pleasures and entertainments of the city, but there was no freedom surrounded by the conventional worries of the constellation in which she moved, a radiant, but no longer a major, planet. Kaspa must know the truth of these things, she reasoned.

Madeline had the courage to wrest herself away from the town and go and grow flowers in a cottage garden; the thing that restrained her was her uncertainty of bettering herself. She could only afford to make the experiment once, for as soon as she left her present situation her place would be filled, and Mrs. Marley would be disinclined to help one guilty of the unpardonable sin of ingratitude.

She knew that many people maintained the virtue of simplicity, but to her the prospect of a rural existence seemed inexpressibly dull. Her slender patrimony would be sufficient to start some sort of business in the country, but before she committed herself she must have first-hand information.

KASPA had lived the most natural of lives and was now aware of the pleasures of artificiality. Which appealed to him most?

Sefton had told her that the lion-man was not content, but Madeline had an idea that she could learn more of Kaspa's true feelings in one conversation than his friend would discover in years of intimacy.

She proposed to Sheila that they should motor out to Honeydale to visit Sefton and Kaspa.

The notion attracted Sheila, but she was amused at Madeline's suggesting it. "The wild man at home," she murmured. "Why this sudden interest in the usurper, Madge?"

"Don't be silly," Madeline replied. "I want to learn something about his life in Africa; and also there is that nice man, Martin Sefton. He is a pleasant change from the young business-men one meets; don't you think so?"

"I think you are at your old game of collecting scalps again," said Sheila tauntingly, "but anyway, I'm all out for the unusual. Let us go and bring unrest to the lives of the hermits."

The following afternoon they set out, and with them went Reeves, who generally managed to accompany Sheila on such excursions. He was genuinely in love with the vivacious little blonde, and considered it unwise to allow her too much license until they were married and he got her safe. She attracted too much admiration for his peace of mind. He didn't think Sefton would try to cut him out, but one never knew with a handsome fellow like the Englishman.

They arrived about five o'clock in the evening as Sefton was sitting down to a lonely tea. He was glad to see them. Kaspa was now a very different person from the unintelligible creature he had taken to Rosewood, and this was a good opportunity to show him off to better advantage.

He invited them to join him at the tea-table; Kaspa was out in the woods, but was expected at any moment.

At that moment Kaspa was ten miles away in the forest, padding softly among the trees, clad in nothing but a swimming-suit, thrilled with the elation of freedom and the music of nature all about him. He put up a deer in a thicket, feeling the need of violent exercise, determined to run it down as he had so often done with the antelope of the Nyoka plains. The deer took him a roundabout course through the forest; it had more staying power than an antelope.

He enjoyed the swift motion through the sunny glades and the scent of the pines in his distended nostrils. This was life, this was joy and freedom, not the round of parties and silly conversations that passed for living among the civilized people he had met in this country. He chased the deer out on to the open ground bordering the lake, and as it trod the loose sandy soil he saw that it was almost spent. He increased his stride and quickened his steps; the end of the hunt was in sight.

Madeline had grown tired of the conversation in the dining-room. Tea was over, and Sefton was talking of the delights of the London season, while Sheila, interested at last, was feeding the fire of reminiscence with artful questions.

It had long been Sheila's ambition to go to Europe. She had elicited a promise from Reeves that he would take her there after they were married. To Madeline in her present mood this talk of social functions

and expensive entertainments was anathema. She had come come all this way to talk of serious things ith Kaspa, and now it seemed she would not see him, for they would have to be starting back to Toronto in an hour or so.

She got up quietly and wandered out onto the veranda, and so on to the lawn. The lawn sloped down to the blue waters of the lake, where it gave place to the green pine-woods that stretched along the shore as far as the eye could see.

It was a beautiful evening. The shadowy room she had left, with its atmosphere of cigarette-smoke and sophistication, seemed most distasteful to the dissatisfied girl. She walked down to the lake shore, passed through a belt of pines, and entered upon a small glade hemmed in by trees that mirrored themselves in the cool waters.

She stood there pensive, looking out over the water. How futile and unsatisfying everything was! She was twenty-three, healthy and beautiful, and condemned to follow a career of senseless gayety until, wearied to death, she made her escape by marrying one of her numerous suitors, to begin again in another environment but still doing the same things, thinking the same thoughts. She hated the whole thing; she felt wasted.

What was wrong with Madeline was that she had no engrossing occupation, nothing to aspire to. Her latent energy of mind required an outlet, but there was no object upon which she could focus it. As she stood there brooding she was acutely unhappy.

There was a sudden crash in the bushes, and she turned upon a startling sight. Out from the forest staggered a fine stag, its breath panting, its eyes turned backwards in a glassy stare of terror, and behind it, running with the effortless freedom of the perfect athlete, came a huge godlike figure clad in a torn and faded swimming-suit.

Kaspa overhauled the floundering deer in the middle of the glade. Bellowing in despair, the wretched animal turned at bay, but Kaspa was too quick for it. He avoided the lowered antlers and, leaping at the beast's shoulders, seized it by head and neck and overthrew it on the grass.

He held it there helpless while he raised leonine face to the sky and sent out the call of triumph and meat: "Aargh-h-h; Ee-argh-h-h!" It rolled and echoed away into the forest, and never had a cry like that been raised upon the shores of that northern lake.

The effect upon Madeline was electrical; she was thrilled and horrified. The wild lion-music coming from the throat of a human being was unnatural and frightening; but there was something pleasurable and inspiring in the sight of that splendid figure wrestling with its prey. It was like some long forgotten scene when the forest was young and naked man pursued his meat, fleet and tireless as the wolf.

Here was reality, ruthless and disgusting, yet imbued with a strange beauty. The girl found herself contrasting this man, hunting his meat in the forest, with other men she knew who hunted dollars in office and sale-room, dollars wherewith to pay men to kill their meat for them with the callous monotony of machinery. The comparison was in Kaspa's favor. Her last scruples were dissolved in admiration of this man's beauty and physical prowess.

THE lion-man stood up, heaved the exhausted deer to its feet and held it by the horns.

"Please don't kill it," called Madeline softly. He caught sight of her standing in the shadow of a tree. She observed that his eyes had a wild laughing glare in them. It made her shudder to look at him. She

Here's how I proved to Mary...
THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE ALKA-SELTZER FOR FAST RELIEF FROM HEADACHE
I CAN'T GO, DARLING... THIS HEADACHE'S TOO MUCH FOR ME!
SURE YOU CAN! HERE, SEE HOW FAST ALKA-SELTZER MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER!
HERE WE GO! WE'RE OFF FOR FUN!
RIGHT, JIM! THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE ALKA-SELTZER FOR FAST RELIEF FROM HEADACHE
Alka-Seltzer

had never imagined that light in human eyes.

"I was not going to kill it," he answered in a soft, deep voice, with a purring note in it. "I have no need of meat." He laughed. "My meat is provided for me nowadays."

"Why not keep it and tame it?" suggested the girl, coming forward."

"Ah, no!" said Kaspa with a ring of passion in his voice. "Let it be wild and free." He released the stag, which went off swaying and snorting into the forest. Madeline studied him; he towered above her, the biggest man she had ever seen.

His curly yellow hair and the golden down on his cheeks—for Kaspa was careless about shaving—reminded her of pictures of old Norse warriors. The muscles were discernible, like ropes, under his satiny skin. There was not an ounce of useless flesh on him, and she was amazed that he had looked so ungainly in his clothes.

Kaspa met her gaze squarely; in another place he would have been awkward and shy, but here he was on his own ground, free, and still filled with the wild ardor of his long chase.

"You are Madeline Moore," he said. "I remember you. You are very beautiful." His eyes glowed at her, and Madeline stepped back with a faint cry. Kaspa laughed. "Don't be afraid—I won't hurt you. Do you mind my saying that you are beautiful? Martin told me that it pleased people to be admired."

Madeline echoed his laugh. "Perhaps it does. I do not mind you telling me I am pretty; it was the way you looked. You are rather frightening, you know." She realized she had nothing to fear from this man; he was a savage, but a gentle savage. The purpose of her visit rose in her mind. She spoke quickly, for fear the opportunity would be lost.

"I want to talk to you about Africa. I am interested in your life before you came here."

Kaspa shook his head slowly. "You would not understand," he murmured.

"Why not? You think that I am like the others, that I think of nothing but theaters and motor-cars and so on. I tell you that I hate all that."

Kaspa looked at her curiously. He seemed to be watching her intently. Then he sighed and repeated: "You would not understand." Madeline became impatient at his obtuseness. "Oh, bother!" she said, biting her lip. After all her expectations she was to be balked by the reticence of the one man who could help her. "I want you to tell me what you think of this life," she said earnestly, "whether you prefer it to the life you led. You see, we all think it is preferable to live in luxury than to 'rough it,' except some men who write books, and it is noticeable that they don't forgo the amenities unless they have to. I want to know the truth; please tell me."

Kaspa considered her gravely. "I was sleeping on the ground and without covering," he said suddenly. "I like being alone and watching the moon rise, and I don't like to do anything just to please someone else. I like being afraid that I may be killed any day. Do you understand that? —because Martin doesn't."

"Why do you like being afraid you may be killed?" she asked wonderingly.

"Because it keeps me from being dissatisfied; it is so pleasant to be alive."

He turned and began to walk past her towards the lake. "So it is 'Sun, moon and stars, brother, and a wind on the heath'," said Madeline half to herself.

Kaspa stopped. "Who said that?" She told him it was a gypsy and why he said it.

"He was right." He waved his arm towards the city. "All that is foolishness," with which sweeping assertion he resumed his progress.

"And love?" called Madeline after him. He paused upon a rock and stared thoughtfully at the water for a minute.

"I don't know about love," said Kaspa, and vanished with a splash into the cool flood. He came to the surface, took three quick strokes to the bank and climbed out, squeezing the water out of his eyes.

"Don't you get lonely?" asked Madeline, regarding with interest the rippling muscles of his chest as he raised and lowered his arms.

"No," said Kaspa, but then he remembered his expulsion from the pack and the long nights spent in solitude on the Bomogo hills. He corrected himself. "Yes, I suppose I should be lonely if I were by myself all the time." He wondered if that was how it would be when he went back, and his expression became a trifle worried. "Some lions live quite alone," he said reflectively, "but they are old fellows nearly always." He regarded Madeline speculatively; it was impossible to tell what he was thinking.

"It wouldn't be the same if you were to do it again," she told him. "That is the trouble—we want too many things at once; at least, I do. I hate the life I am leading, and yet I don't believe I could live any

other. It is perfectly hopeless; I don't know what I want." She stood with downcast head, the picture of dejection.

Kaspa looked at her wonderingly. "Well, I know what I want," he said. "I want to go back to Africa."

He plunged into the lake again, and this time when he came to the surface he swam steadily out into deep water.

Madeline watched him for a few minutes, then she walked slowly back to the house.

The Rosewood party had departed when Kaspa returned. Sefton was annoyed with him. It looked as if he stayed away on purpose. The lion-man admitted this when taxed with it.

"They only wanted to look at me like they do at lions in the zoo," he said. "I don't understand what they talk about, and I feel stupid with them."

Sefton laughed impatiently.

"You must try to take people as they come, old man. They are not bad sorts really, and they can't help thinking differently from you. Their lives have been so different, you see." To which Kaspa replied that he did not mind them, but he only wanted to be left alone.

Then he considered for a moment and said, "The dark girl is nice; I like her."

"Miss Moore?" cried Sefton. "Did you see her?"

Kaspa told him what had happened by the lake, and as Sefton listened to the recital of that episode his face became clouded. The lion-man went off into the house singing to himself, a habit he had lately acquired, leaving his friend staring out from the veranda over the silent lake.

Since first he had brought Kaspa to Canada he had dreaded the intrusion of a woman into his life. His own admiration for Kaspa had assured him that sooner or later some woman would become enamored of his pupil, and then there would be trouble. For Sefton knew well that Kaspa was still at heart a savage, that his thin veneer of manners and education concealed instincts as direct and natural as those of the animals among which he had lived. So far he had shown no desire to pursue the female of his species. Absorbing all his ideas from books under the careful guidance of his friend, he had come to look upon love as a pure and noble sentiment which human beings enjoyed and which at his own stage of development must be denied.

For two years Sefton had kept him out of the way of women, but during all that time he had known that one day the strongest of human passions would break through the bonds of his vigilance, and when that happened Sefton's opinion was, "God help the woman!" He was not afraid for Kaspa. The lion-man was strong and predatory; he would take what his nature urged him to take, and consequences would be no concern of his.

Sefton felt sure that the softer emotions had no place in his friend's make-up. He was kind and gentle in small things, but in great things he would be ruthless and selfish as a lion. Sefton knew little about men and still less about lions. The fact that Madeline had met and talked to Kaspa and had mentioned it to nobody seemed ominous and significant to him. That it should be such a girl, whose powers of attraction he had himself experienced, made the matter doubly serious.

He continued to brood over it for the rest of the night, while Kaspa in vest and shorts reclined on the dewy grass under the moon and thought about the thorn bush of the Nyoka plains, the silver African moonlight stealing amongst the shadows, and the long dun shapes of lions stalking through it.

DURING the weeks that followed Sefton made frequent journeys to Toronto. He was often a guest at Rosewood, where he became popular with everybody, and he had many discussions with Horton about what was to be done with Kaspa.

Horton was of opinion that the lion-man should now be brought out into the world to take his proper place in society. "He doesn't make a very favorable impression on people, apparently," he said. "That's only natural, because he's so shut up in himself. He wants to get about among his own kind a bit and learn what men are like and how to treat 'em. I must say that his progress has been simply marvelous. I had no idea that in two years he would be able to talk and read English, and to conduct himself like a gentleman."

"Good manners are a part of character," Sefton pointed out. "Kaspa has a fine character, and decent behavior is natural to him. I confess his progress is astonishing, but in some ways he does not advance at all."

"You mean that in his case culture is just a veneer—it does not affect him deeply?"

"Not exactly," Sefton replied with a worried air. "I must explain what I feel, because you are his only other true friend, and, being Denison Starke's trustee, it is

important that you should understand the matter." He paused a moment to collect his thoughts, and Horton watched him attentively. "He is such a peculiar person, broad and fine, and incapable of mean thoughts, and that is just about the trouble. Some of his illusions will be pretty rudely shattered some day. I am not anxious for that day to come."

Horton smiled. "We all have to go through that," he observed.

"Yes, but we were brought up to assimilate things gradually. We live without heartache in a world of sham and self-deceit, but picture him suddenly brought in contact with the evil that men do with the consent and applause of their fellows. It will break his heart, and he will break some heads. It's going to be difficult."

Horton saw it clearly enough. "There is only one cure for all that—he must begin to mix with his own kind and endeavor to understand them. Listening to the conversation of worldly people is bad from your point of view, but by that means Kaspa will learn more of the world than by any other way. I suggest a new form of training from now onwards. Kaspa is quite presentable; he must mix with his fellows."

"He won't stay in town," Sefton hastened to assure him. "He says he feels shut in, and so on. I must tell you that at Honeydale he spends half his time wandering about in the forest with nothing on but a bathing-suit. I've seen him running in the moonlight, just like a wild creature."

"I don't advocate a change to Toronto yet; that will come later," said Horton. Luckily he is quite willing to leave everything in our hands. He never questions our decisions."

"He just doesn't care," Sefton put in.

"He will later. At present he does not realize the power of wealth and the good things it will buy. I propose to have a house-party at Honeydale—all of us who know him. A week or two of picnics and dances will draw him out. And then there are the girls; they must have a softening influence upon him, don't you think so?"

"I'm afraid of that," said Sefton, who had listened to this proposal with disquiet. "Have you ever thought what is going to happen if he falls in love, Horton?"

The journalist laughed. "You can't keep him away from women forever. He's got to mix with them and learn to look after himself. If he falls in love with either of those girls it will do him good. They won't make fools of themselves; they know too much."

Horton waved aside all of Sefton's objections and settled the matter with his customary expedition. In a week or two he would bring the party out to Honeydale; meanwhile Kaspa was to be carefully prepared to carry out the duties of a host. "Hang it all, man! This boy is the representative of a fine family, and he's got to learn to entertain his friends. He can't live like a hermit, with his wealth and position. Off you go and fix things up now. It'll be all right, I promise you."

Sefton returned, full of misgivings, to Honeydale, and began to prepare Kaspa for the coming of his guests.

The lion-man acquiesced in this invasion of his privacy. He realized that Horton and Sefton were doing their best for him, and he agreed to follow their instructions until they deemed him competent to take charge of his own affairs. He enquired if Madeline were to be of the party, and brightened perceptibly when he learned that she was. He had not forgotten the dark girl who had wanted to know about Africa. Sefton's heart contracted painfully at the sight of that reminiscent smile. He had seen a good deal of Madeline lately; she was constantly in his thoughts.

Horton wrote to say that the house-party was fixed for a week ahead, and during the time of waiting the friends continued the usual routine of their work.

Life was pleasant at Honeydale. There were horses to ride, a tennis court, and an excellent library.

SEFTON was not entirely a studious man. He relished the arts, and literature particularly, but he was also an outdoor man, fond of sport and athletics. He taught Kaspa to box. It was amusing to spar with some one with the speed of a panther and triple the strength of a world's champion. Without any science or practice Kaspa was able to handle his tutor as he wished.

Memories of cub games came back to him, and at first he had been inclined to deal Sefton love pats which despite the padded gloves, almost broke his neck. But once the giant understood that he must strike as though caressing, instead of punishing, they got on better, and Sefton was enabled to land heavily on his friend without disturbing his equanimity.

This was a joy to him, for, knowing Kaspa's lionlike temper and ability to kill most men in a few seconds, he was terrified that his friend might one day incur the penalty of the law by resenting an injury in too natural a manner. It therefore pleased him to see signs of forbearance and self-

control in his pupil. Kaspa became a clever boxer, and, had he been in need of money, would have found no difficulty in earning a living at the pugilistic game.

The companions swam and played tennis together, and even hunted, although Kaspa had a peculiar distaste for killing things that he did not wish to eat. He explained that the creatures of the wild are not as bloodthirsty as man and see little profit in killing for its own sake.

Sefton had not the malicious spirit that characterizes many so-called sportsmen, and was glad of this. At the same time he found Kaspa difficult to understand, for although the wild man was disinclined to kill game birds and beasts, it was not because of humane principles.

Kaspa was indifferent to the sufferings of creatures; he simply did not see the use of hunting when the larder was full. He could not explain his callousness to this companion. Everything had to suffer, he said, and when suffering was over it was nothing much really. It was the law of life, and one could not alter it. Did one take it to heart, life would become miserable.

"But," said Sefton, "we cannot bear the thought of suffering inflicted upon harmless animals, and therefore we have societies to prevent it and punish the perpetrators. Don't you agree with that?"

Kaspa shrugged his shoulders. He thought it strange that men hunted and shot animals, and at the same time maintained organization to protect them from suffering. He pointed out that a lion killed a zebra by the most expeditious means, which also happened to be the most merciful, but that the object was the death of the zebra, and the lion did not interest himself in the animal's feelings. "You men and us lions," said Kaspa, who always looked upon himself as an animal, "are equally callous, only we don't kill uselessly."

"But a lion will get into a boma and kill a dozen cattle," Sefton protested. "That is useless slaughter if you like."

Kaspa shrugged his shoulders again. "Only because they rush about and annoy him. He thinks they ought to run away, and when they don't he kills them for the sake of peace and quietness."

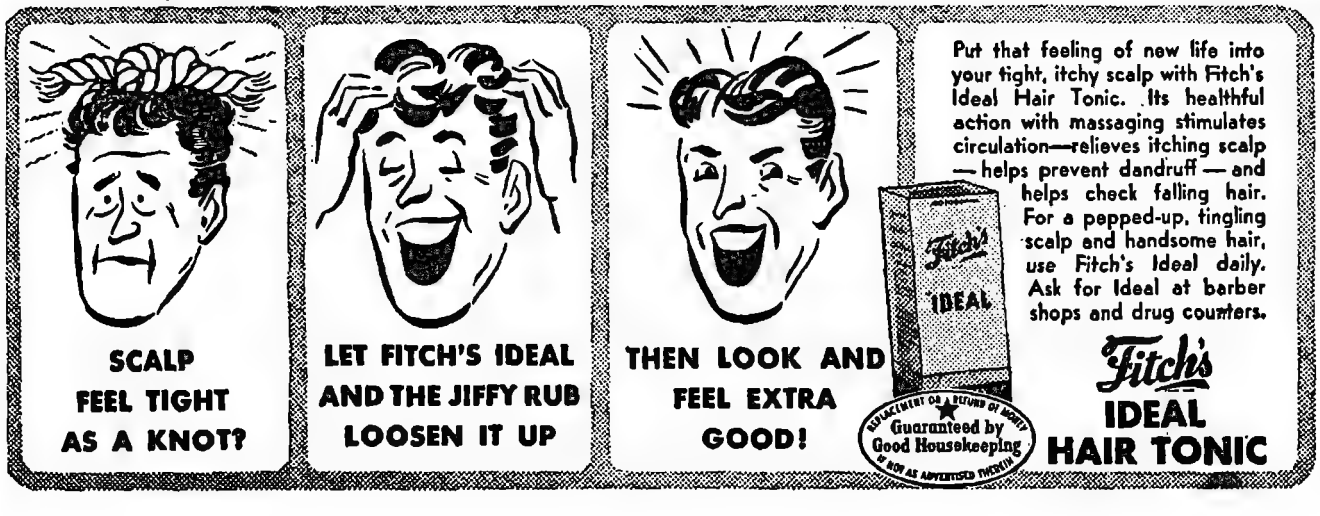
Sefton smilled with a slightly worried air. That was what he was afraid of with Kaspa, that he might be tempted to kill a dozen men, "for the sake of peace and quietness," in much the same thoughtless way as a lion. He reflected that perhaps Horton was right, that only contact with his kind would tame, and make tolerant, this simple son of the wilderness.

But his apprehensions returned full force when a big car arrived and from it dismounted Sheila, Madeline, Lucian, and Reeves. They were so garish and noisy in this spot that had been so peaceful before.

Kaspa, who hated noise, seemed to shrink into himself at the intrusion upon his privacy; he did not fit into a holiday party any more than a lion would.

The trouble began immediately. Reeves caught sight of the boxing gloves hanging on a nail in the veranda. He wanted to put them on. He said he had never had a fight with a wild man, and was anxious to see how far science could overmatch brute strength. Kaspa showed no desire to accommodate the stockbroker, and Reeves' tone became faintly superior in consequence.

Sefton, with an imploring glance, enlisted Madeline's help. It was useless appealing to Sheila, whose mischievous mind would have delighted in a row. "What about having some tea instead of getting all hot and bad tempered with that foolish pastime?" said the girl. Reeves was overruled, and tea was brought out on to the veranda, from where they could obtain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a view of the lake and the somber pine forest clothing its banks.

Sefton was informed that Mrs. Marley had a slight cold and was not coming, and that Horton would arrive in three days' time to spend the week-end. He groaned in spirit, for he was depending upon the sober influence of the older people to make things run more smoothly.

KASPA was silent and contemplative during tea. He seemed more than ever like a lion at the zoo, contemptuously aloof from the humans who stared at him. For there was no doubt that the visitors did stare. Kaspa was a distraction they were unable to ignore. Since they had seen him last his personality had gained strength in some peculiar way. On this occasion it was impossible to ignore him. Even Sheila was impressed and curious, wanted to know all about him, to see him show off his tricks like a circus pony, or a farmyard imitator at a children's party.

The tension was increased by Kaspa's disinclination to accept the position of entertainer. He had no intention of talking about his previous life for the edification of people who were not in sympathy with him and could not understand what he told them. He sat silent, patiently waiting for them to go about their own concerns and leave him to his.

While Sheila and Lucian were arguing about the latest dance steps, Kaspa was thinking of big lonely plains and the night breeze whispering across them, and Madeline was covertly watching the lights and shadows in his tawny eyes. The girl had been unable to get him out of her mind. Intensely romantic, and an admirer of physical beauty, for the first time she had come in contact with some one in whom these traits were marvelously embodied. She wanted to get Kaspa alone somewhere, to sit and listen to tales of a world she did not understand, but which had an irresistible fascination for her. She had planned to do this at the first opportunity. When the others decided upon tennis and trooped off to change, she alleged a headache, and remained to talk to Kaspa.

"Well, do you still want to go back to Africa?" she asked when they were alone.

"Yes, very much," said Kaspa. He was pleased that the chatterers had departed and left him to talk to the dark girl who was so good to look at.

"In what does the fascination lie? I thought it was a hot, uncomfortable place, until I read books about it: I know now that parts of it must be splendid, but I don't think I should like to live there with ticks, and ants, and those horrible droughts."

Kaspa smiled. "Droughts are bad," he said. Without thinking, he began to tell her of the great drought on the Nyoka, when the game all trekked, and lions and hyenas roamed in starving packs over the veld. He had never spoken of these things to any one, not even Sefton, and he wondered at himself for being so loquacious with this girl who could not be expected to realize the import of his story. Sefton had made many attempts to get Kaspa to relate his experiences, but the lion-man would never talk about himself, and most of the information his friend had gleaned had been in the form of brief answers to his questions.

Now Kaspa let himself go. Something of his longing for his country and the life of the lions infused fire and pathos into his narrative, so that his paucity of words proved no obstacle to the realism of his tale. He told of Ruka and Dogo, of Mala and Zito, and their struggle for existence in the great famine.

At last Madeline attained the desire that had long been latent in her mind—she looked at life through the eyes of a wild lion, an experience which, she realized, no other woman had ever enjoyed. She was made to see the shivering Bomogo crouched over their fires, listening to the grunting of the lean famished beasts prowling outside the huts. The wailing cry of the hyena sounded in her ears, and the fierce snarls of lions fighting for their lives against hunger-maddened scavengers.

Through those scenes stalked Kaspa, not shy, not the awkward figure she had known, but a wild magnificent person, the friend of the night and the king of the lions. She saw him, fierce, quick, and cunning, stealing the Bomogo oxen from the manyatta. Before her dazzled eyes he stood, majestic and terrible, warning the interlopers from his kill, ready with knife and muscle to grapple in savage combat with the great tawny-maned lions of the plains.

Kaspa talked on and on, his voice broken by soft slurring purrs and wrathful rumblings when human speech was difficult to him, and the girl leaned forward listening, her eyes intent upon those strange hazel orbs, in which a yellow glare came and went like summer lightning.

Sheila broke the spell of that story.

"Who on earth is making those dreadful

noises?" she said, standing in the doorway swinging her tennis racket. Her amused glance traveled over them. "Was it Othello?" she asked, bubbling with laughter. Madeline did not reply. She rose and walked down on the lawn, her mind still bemused with the strange things she had heard.

Sefton had also been a spectator of that scene. His heart was like lead within him. She was so beautiful, so true and desirable as mate and comrade, and she never had looked at him with that light in her eyes.

"Come on, you tennis fiends," said Sheila. "Are you coming down to watch, Madge?"

Madeline and Kaspa went down to sit in the summer house and watch a game that was not exciting. Lucian was a poor player, and did little but strike the ball into the net. Sheila, who loved tennis for the game, became irritated, and beseeched Madeline to change and join in; and, since Kaspa seemed for the moment to have exhausted his fund of conversation, the girl recovered from her headache and complied.

She was a strong, graceful player, and she was well aware that she made a splendid picture of virile womanhood leaping and running and putting her pliant body behind every drive and volley. It was therefore somewhat annoying to see Kaspa unostentatiously remove himself the moment her attention was off him. She wanted to show him that she was also quick, strong, and skillful, not merely a soft, spoiled child of civilization.

They did not see Kaspa again that night. He went back to the house, changed into a swimming-suit, and spent the remainder of the evening round the lake shore. When darkness fell he retired into the forest and went roaming along the trails. By midnight he was twenty miles from Honeydale and had almost forgotten the existence of his guests.

In his absence they amused themselves according to their wont, with an impromptu dance and a game of cards in which everybody shouted and got furiously excited. Madeline played and sang in the drawing-room, with Sefton sitting by her side mutely worshiping. Her gaze looked past him out into the starlight night. She was thinking of the lion-man and wondering what it felt like to be one with the night and the beasts. Where was he now? she wondered; and what doing, alone in the forest? It would be splendid if one day he would take her with him out into the woods and teach her the meanings of the sights and sounds of nature.

At that moment the object of her thoughts was lying along the bough of a tree like a leopard, watching deer feeding in the glade below him. There was not a memory of Honeydale or its occupants in his mind; he was an animal, part of the wilderness that surrounded him.

CHAPTER VII

GOOD-BY

IT WAS afternoon of the next day before Kaspa woke from sleep in the little cave among some rocks that he found for himself. He bethought him of the house-party at Honeydale, and considered that he would grieve Sefton if he absented himself further. After a bath in a brook he set off at his long slouching stride, and about tea-time reached the house and his bedroom unobserved, where he changed his swimming-suit for flannels and a soft shirt. He arrived at the table in time to hear his guests planning their amusement for the evening.

It appeared that a traveling circus had come to the district, and they were bent upon visiting it. Coconut shies and shooting galleries were much to Reeves' taste, and he was offering to wager that Sheila was a better marksman than any of them present. No reference was made to Kaspa's absence. Sefton had told them that Kaspa did as he liked and would brook no restraint. He was included in the evening's outing as a matter of course.

He had little idea of what he was to see. He had read of circuses in books, but he did not connect them with menageries and cages of wild animals, amongst which would be African creatures, herded and confined for the masses to gape at. And in Bembo's Circus down at the township were two maned lions from Eastern Africa, close guarded behind thick bars, for their tempers were not amiable.

The fair was in full swing when they arrived. Roundabouts revolved to the shrieking accompaniment of steam organs, shots rang out from the galleries, and showmen and merrymakers vied with each other in the stridency of their shouting. Kaspa became excited and irritable after five minutes of the noise. They patronized the sideshows, dragging the reluctant Kaspa with them.

The country folk stared and whispered at the sight of the huge figure led like

a Newfoundland dog about the show ground by the eager laughing visitors from the city. They had heard of Kaspa, although his true history had been kept secret. They knew of him as a strange person who had never been out of the wilds of Africa, a half-mythical land where the people were black and barbarous, like the Mohawks had been in the days of their forefathers. Sheila vindicated her sweetheart's boasts about her prowess with the rifle; she was easily the best shot in the booth. Lucian accumulated half a dozen coconuts, which he distributed among his companions, much to their disgust. Sheila refused to carry hers, and handed them to Kaspa, who went about with a coconut in each hand, looking like a Stone Age man armed for the chase.

Eventually they gravitated to the circus tent. They got seats in the front row, separated from the arena by a low barrier. Trapeze artists and clowns did not interest Kaspa. The former were not as clever as monkeys, and the latter were like drunken natives at a dance. The entry of a small Indian elephant, who stood on a tub, aroused him for a moment, but in this subservient, dwarfed specimen he could not recognize the lord of the African wilderness.

And then from somewhere at the back came the roar of a lion. Kaspa did not move, but his whole frame suddenly became tense, and his eyes watchful.

"Sefton gave an exclamation, "Great Scott! Lions! I never thought of that. I say, you people, what about going?"

"Why?" said Reeves, grinning.

Sheila turned to see the effect of this question. It provoked her to be opposed in any wish.

Sefton answered the stockbroker's question by a significant glance at Kaspa.

"Heavens," said Reeves, "it's like going out with a savage dog—have to keep him away from all the canine pugilists, you know!"

Sefton hesitated and finally subsided. He noticed that Kaspa had not moved and was sitting with eyes riveted upon the curtain at the back of the arena. It might be all right; probably do the old fellow good to see some of his pals again.

Madeline leaned towards him and whispered, "Something is going to happen; I feel it. Let's get away from this place."

That awakened Sefton's disquiet again, but before he could answer the curtain was drawn aside and men began to push a big cage into the arena.

The cage contained two lions, a tiger, and three bears.

The bears sat in their corners nodding their heads stupidly; the lions and the tiger paced to and fro with heavy silent tread. Every time they passed each other they snarled faintly and their ears flattened. Kaspa's eyes were upon them. He was quite unaware of the audience about him, and whenever the lions snarled a low rumbling sounded in his throat. Sefton laid a restraining hand upon his shoulder. He did not notice it.

A fair, well-built man ran into the ring. He was dressed in a sky-blue uniform with gold facings, and carried a whip and a revolver in his hands. The ring-master, a fat, pompous figure, stepped forward and raised his hat. He introduced Carlo Lefranc, the world-famous animal trainer, who would give an exhibition of the power of the mind over brute savagery.

The beasts were ferocious and untamed, but Le Franc could control them, and even make them perform tricks, by the curious hypnotic power that he exercised and by which he was rendered immune from harm at the fangs and claws of the most savage animals. He requested the audience not to be alarmed, for the beasts could not escape from their cage.

Amidst the applause that followed his speech, Lefranc bowed, turned, and ran up the steps of the cage. Two men, armed with short, three-pronged pikes, came forward and stood near by. The trainer entered the cage quickly, shutting the door behind him.

Gasps and exclamations arose from the audience as he advanced upon the snarling beasts, cracking his whip and shouting. A lion sprang aside and ran around him, bumping into the tiger as it did so. There was a furious outburst of sound, and the two animals exchanged blows with their paws until the trainer drove them apart with heavy strokes of the whip.

Madeline glanced at Kaspa. The lion-man was crouching in his seat, the rumbling in his throat had become deep and menacing. The trainer turned to the excited audience and bowed smilingly, and in an instant the lion and tiger were at each other's throats again.

Amidst the uproar Reeves shouted, "That fellow will be in trouble if he doesn't watch out!" He got to his feet, glaring irresolutely.

Lefranc could not separate the fighting beasts; they were rolling over and over as Bulu and Nguvu had done in the Nyoka

thorn bush. He fired two blank cartridges from his revolver, and the lion behind him reared up and struck him on the shoulders and head.

Pandemonium broke loose. The audience was on its feet screaming and shouting. The men with tridents were poking uselessly at the medley of fighting beasts, for both lions were now at grips with the tiger and their snarling and roaring was deafening.

Kaspa shot from his seat, cleared the barrier at a bound, and ran to the cage. Lefranc was crawling on hands and knees, the blood streaming down his face. He made a groaning, gasping sound of fear and pain. He reached the door, unlatched it, and stumbled down the steps into the arms of the frantic ring-master, and at that moment the tiger wrested itself free from the grappling lions and threw itself out of the door to safety, knocking the two men flying in its course.

It encountered Kaspa. The lion-man guarded a swinging paw-stroke and dealt the tiger a terrific buffet on the side of the head. The animal was weak and half starved; it rolled over in the dust of the ring.

Kaspa sprang clear, the fighting call pealing from his lips, and the lions heard it and charged to the aid of their comrade, battling against the common foe. The three of them threw themselves at the tiger, biting and clawing like cats.

In a few minutes the beast was dead, and Kaspa was saying, "Steady, brothers, steady; he is dead and we are the victors." Unconsciously assuming the leadership, he raised the victory cry, and the tent echoed with awful music in which the lions joined.

THE place presented a dreadful spectacle. People were fighting and scrambling at the exits, and women and children were lying among the seats, bleeding and battered by their more powerful neighbors.

The Honeydale party stood staring, too proud to join the rout, and uncertain how to act; all except Madeline, who sat still in her chair, her eyes strained upon the fight in the arena, her hand clutching her breast. The ring-master had recovered from his upset. He had dashed behind the curtain, and now reappeared with a rifle.

Kaspa wheeled upon him, masking the snarling lions with his body. For the moment human speech had left him; he could only growl and snarl like the animals he protected.

The ring-master, white-faced and trembling, backed before the advance of this terrible figure, its face streaked with blood, its clothes flapping about it. The man was uncertain for his own safety and inclined to guard himself with the rifle. Sefton was in time to prevent that. He recovered from his helpless stupor, and, being equipped with the courage that faces death with reluctance but determination, he saw his duty clearly and did it.

He passed within two paces of the lions, and it was extraordinary that they did not attack him; he caught the ring-master's rifle and began to explain the incredible truth that all was now well, and that Kaspa, being half a lion himself, could control the lions and prevent them from doing further damage.

The ring-master argued and protested. He had never heard of such a thing, and in any case he was much too worried and excited to act upon anything other than preconceived ideas. An escaped lion was dangerous and must be shot or captured. It could only be captured by men with nets and ropes, and here were none of those things; therefore shoot the lions before they did further mischief.

By the time he had told Sefton this and several artists and helpers had gathered behind him armed with a miscellany of articles, from axes to kitchen knives, Kaspa had shepherded the lions back into their cage and was talking to them in their own language, explaining his presence and the uselessness of resisting men and guns.

Now that the danger was over every one recaptured his presence of mind. It was quite easy to see what should have been done. The ring-master should have exhorted the audience to keep calm and to file out quietly, Reeves should have aided by his example, Lucian should have jumped to assist the circus staff, and so on.

Nobody had done these things, and in consequence they were all annoyed with the only person who had acted naturally and courageously, to wit, Kaspa.

Little Kaspa cared for their opinion; he was interested in his new friends and the details of their capture and life in the circus.

The ring-master began by demanding compensation for his tiger, which he said could have been overpowered and recaged without difficulty, but for Kaspa's interference.

Kaspa directed Sefton to pay the man the value of the dead animal, and also to

purchase the two lions, which he was determined to take back with him to Honeydale.

These negotiations resulted in Sefton losing his temper and accusing the manager of being a rogue and a robber.

"Pay him the money," said Kaspa impatiently. "Are we tradesmen that we should bargain with the fellow?"

"Instead of wasting time over that, why not help with the injured people?" Sheila cried wrathfully.

She was busy reviving women and children who had fainted, and by now the news had circulated and many helpers were at hand.

Kaspa paid no attention to the injured people. They paid money to have wild animals captured and exhibited for their amusement, and as soon as there was any danger to themselves they fled shrieking and trampling upon each other like a herd of stampeding cattle. Kaspa did not admire his fellow humans, and was entirely uninterested in their troubles. He occupied himself with his caged friends.

The trainer Lefranc was removed to a hospital; he was not badly hurt. Some of the victims of the stampede accompanied him, but there were no serious cases, and this was entirely due to Kaspa's intervention, as Madeline recognized.

Had the desperate tiger got among the crowd, there would have been funerals to attend in Port Perry.

Kaspa had saved them, but he received no thanks for it. They all remembered that scene in the arena—brute grappling with brute—with a shudder of distaste. Madeline had thrilled to that fight. It was brutal and elemental, but she was aware that all the edifice of civilization was reared upon just such primitive strength and cruelty.

She longed to have had some part in Kaspa's deed, to have leaped with him over the barrier and helped him with her puny strength. Thus she might have won some word of praise from him; but she had sat there dazed and useless like a sheep about to be slaughtered. She turned upon Reeves with vehement questions.

"Why did we all stay helpless while Kaspa saved us? I feel ashamed. We are no better than these country people, who acted like sheep."

It seemed that people of her caste were always passive, while others fought their battles and defended them. It was not good form to show excitement, even at a lion-fight. The stockbroker laughed cynically as he answered all her questions.

"Dislike of the limelight," he said. "We don't shrink from being killed, but we hate making a public spectacle of ourselves. Our abysmal brute has no such qualms."

Sefton scowled at him; he was over by the cage persuading Kaspa to leave his friends. The manager had promised to look after the lions until they could be delivered the following day. Kaspa reluctantly accompanied his tutor out of the tent. The rest of the party followed, pushing their way through a crowd of people, who strove to catch a glimpse of the man who was supposed to have killed a tiger with his hands and thrown a couple of lions back into the cage from which they had escaped.

"This is the limit of nastiness," declared Sheila, listening to the gabble, and watching the blood-stained, tattered figure of the lion-man towering above the excited crowd.

"I agree," her fiancé muttered. "When one brings out a wild animal one must expect something of this kind. It is like traveling with a freak show."

WHEN the car was out upon the deserted road to Honeydale, they were all relieved. Sefton drove with Kaspa sitting beside him. He cast anxious glances at his friend's torn face and hands, but Kaspa seemed unaware of his hurts.

The encounter with the tiger and the meeting with his own people, as he considered the jungle folk to be, had awakened old memories in his mind. He was more of a lion than a man that night, and the others in the car with him were no more than monkeys, full of silly chatter and flustered actions.

Madeline was silent and preoccupied. She was now fully aware that Kaspa was a potent force in any sphere of action. Previously she had regarded him as a sort of wild, untamed creature, invincible upon his own ground, but singularly helpless among civilized mankind. She realized that she had been mistaken.

Kaspa was a force to be reckoned with in any company. He had dominated the circus tent, and every one had been conscious of that dominance. If Kaspa could be persuaded to become a respectable citizen, he would become a power in the land. Power radiated from him. He was a forceful personality, the most forceful she had ever met. She compared him with Reeves, a strong man in his way, but infinitely weak beside the lion-man.

New thoughts were born of this realization. Kaspa could be made into a great man if he could be influenced to direct his endeavors in the right channels. Why should she not influence him? Poor boy, he was so friendless and alone in a world so strange to him. He had Sefton, but Sefton was different.

Madeline felt that no one could understand the lion-man as she could. She was convinced that she had the same wild nature, long suppressed by the conventions of her upbringing, but an integral part of her once it was realized.

When Kaspa had sprung to do battle with the tiger she had felt a surge of primitive emotion such as she had never before experienced. There should be a new interest in her discontented life; she would be Kaspa's friend and strive to mold his splendid character into something still finer—and more gentle.

When they arrived at Honeydale, she insisted upon bathing and doctoring Kaspa's wounds. The others gathered in the drawing-room, drinking cocktails and talking excitedly about the events of the night, all except Sefton, who wandered restlessly about, one moment assisting Madeline, the next arguing with Lucian and Reeves, who were protesting against Kaspa's avowed intention of bringing the lions to Honeydale and allowing them to run loose.

"They will be quite safe," he explained. "Kaspa can control them, and of course they will be securely caged when their master is not with them."

But Lucian protested that it was "a bit thick," and Reeves said: "If you think I am going to let Sheila stay here with lions roaming about, you are mistaken. That fellow is not responsible; you ought not to let him do just what he likes."

In another room, caring nothing about his altercation, Madeline was fixing the final bandages on Kaspa's lacerated arms. Her curly brown head was bent within a few inches of his face, and the scent of her hair was in his nostrils.

She finished her task with a final pat and looked up smilingly. "There, does that feel better?"

Kaspa grunted softly. The wounds were nothing to him, since they were not dangerous.

Madeline took the bowl of discolored water and walked out on to the veranda, where she emptied it on the grass.

Kaspa followed on silent feet. There was no conscious intent in his action; he wanted to be with her, so he followed her out into the warm night, where the crickets were chirping and the breeze brought the smell of pines from the forest. When she turned it was to find his great form poised before her.

Without thinking, Kaspa took her in his arms. The bowl fell unheeded to the ground with a clear ringing noise. He buried his face in the white curve of her neck and so held her, his whole body trembling. After the first instinctive resistance Madeline lay quiet in those mighty arms. The breeze sighed softly in the creepers and the crickets sang their shrill monotonous song.

Kaspa raised his head and sighed deeply. In the starlight he could see her large shadowy eyes looking up at him.

He essayed to speak, but only a soft purring sound came from his lips.

"Kaspa, I love you," said Madeline.

He had never heard so sweet a sound. It seemed as if the whole music of the wilderness—the notes of birds, the fluting of the wind in tall trees, the sound of falling water, distant and subdued—had coalesced into that one song of human emotion. He sighed again. Her soft body, held against him, was dearer than life itself; her radiant eyes were more beautiful than the stars. This was the culmination of all joy. He was unconscious of everything but this precious creature that was his.

And then he saw her eyes go startled. The habit of watchfulness reasserted itself; he turned his head like a flash. The strained white face of Sefton appeared in the doorway. He did not speak but passed them quickly and ran down the steps into the garden.

Kaspa released Madeline and stood staring after his friend, a stricken expression on his face. He heard Madeline sob, and then she ran past him into the house.

Kaspa made no movement to follow her. He cleared the veranda railing with one catlike leap and vanished into the night.

AN HOUR later, as Sefton stood looking out over the lake, the lion-man emerged silently from the forest and stood beside him.

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you," said Sefton in miserable accents, "but I can't; I feel it is all a terrible mistake."

Kaspa took him by the shoulders and swung him round like a child. "You love her!" he accused fiercely.

Sefton bowed his head before the yellow glare in the lion-man's eyes.

"My God, yes. But it is not that. You are a finer man than I; it is only natural she should love you—I know that. But it is wrong, Kaspa; it is hopeless."

He wrested himself from Kaspa's weakening grasp and spoke vehemently, while the lion-man stood with bent head, listening.

"I know you. I haven't lived with you all this time without learning your character. You are still an animal—a fine animal—but no mate for a woman like her. What do you know of love? Love means sacrifice. Are you prepared to settle down as the husband of a society woman in a Canadian city? You will finally go away into the wilderness, living for the day, forgetting everything."

Kaspa looked up quickly.

"She will come with me; she will share my life."

Sefton's laugh was as bitter as a cry of pain. "The life of a savage! The hardship and discomfort of the veld with wild beasts for companionship. The life of a lion!"

He was silent for a moment and then burst out again:

"You have no conception of love as a man feels it. I would do anything for her—give my whole life for her happiness. You will make her unhappy; her love for you will be nothing but a curse to her. My God! I could shoot you rather than that. What are you, anyway? A wild animal that I brought out of Africa, to ruin a splendid woman's life."

He turned suddenly and plunged away along the shore, tripping blindly over rocks and bushes.

Kaspa stood looking at the lake in silent thought. He knew little of the ways of man. It seemed to him that Sefton must be right. This wonderful thing that had happened to him was wrong; he was not fit to be the husband of such a woman as Madeline.

At the thought of her, possession was the dominant note of his revery. He wanted to take her away into the wilderness to live, they two together. She must be his and share his life. The idea of sharing her life was terrifying to him.

He thought of Rosewood, the hot stuffy rooms full of the scents of flowers and tobacco—Sheila, and Reeves, and Mrs. Marley; the dances and parties they talked about; and then the drab bustle of the streets, the noise and endless monotony of it. He shuddered. Deep in his mind dwelt the picture of the moonlit thorns, the hushed splendor of the African night, and the low comforting grunts of his comrades of the pack all about him in the shadows. No, he could not be a man.

Sefton was right—man's love was something different. It was sacrifice, such sacrifice as an animal did not know. He, who could give his life for his comrade without hesitation, must do something more—he must give his happiness.

Sefton was his friend, he owed all to Sefton; should he be nothing but a curse to those that loved him, as Sefton had predicted? He must act like a man if only this once; and then he would be an animal again—live and die an animal, without regrets.

He turned and slouched away through the trees, and as he went queer gulps sounded in his throat and warm drops ran down his cheeks. Kaspa did not understand what was happening to him; for the first time in his life he was weeping.

He had twenty dollars in his pocket. He made for Port Perry and the railway station. He would never see Madeline again and as he made that decision the gulping in his throat grew more pronounced. He took to his heels and ran madly through the wood, flying from the sorrow that pursued him.

AT SEVEN o'clock in the morning Horton was aroused from his bed to interview a visitor who would not be denied.

He received Kaspa in his dressing-gown. The moment the lion-man entered he saw that something untoward had happened, and he dreaded the nature of it.

He indicated a chair, seated himself, and looked Kaspa in the eye with a searching regard.

"Now what is it? Let's hear the worst," he said.

Kaspa was direct and to the point. "I am tired of this business, Horton," he said. "You have done much for me, and I can never be grateful enough, but I am no good. You cannot make a civilized man out of me, and if you did I would not thank you for it. I am going back to Africa."

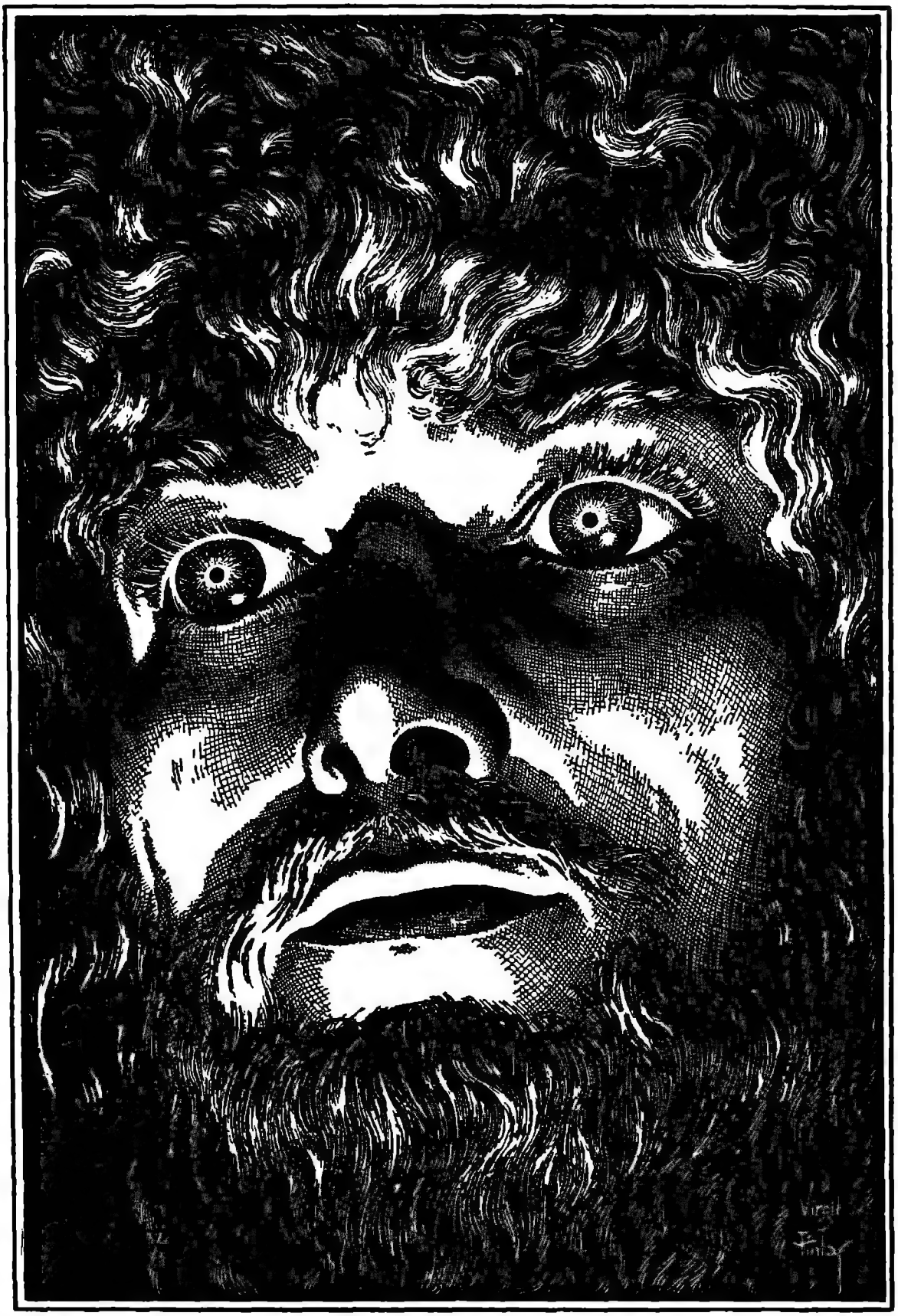
Horton realized the determination behind the words.

"Why have you left Honeydale?" he asked. "Has Sefton come with you?"

Kaspa shook his head. "No one knows I am here; I do this myself. I am going back to Africa."

His face had a strained, set look, his eyes were clouded and stormy. Horton felt vaguely alarmed.

"Softly, softly," he said. "We agreed to



It was the savage yellow orbs of the lion that stared back. . . .

give this thing a fair trial, and the trial has hardly been fair, you'll agree. Up to now you have lived out in the country, seeing nobody and enjoying none of the amenities. You must live in the cities for a while before you know what there is to life, with an income like yours."

Kaspa shook his head impatiently. "I will not argue about it. You will never understand me, and I shall never understand you. We are different. I will live my life my own way; no one shall prevent me. Mrs. Marley, Sheila, and Lucian can have my grandfather's money; I want none of it. Give me enough to get back to my home and you may do what you like with the rest."

Horton laughed. "Things are not done like that, my boy," he said. "I have no more right to give away your money than they have to accept it. It is yours, and only you can handle it. You know I have had to get your signature to a power of attorney before I could provide for your expenses at Honeydale."

Kaspa smiled. "Good!" he cried. "Then if it is my money I can do what I like with it, and I will start now. Give me money to go back to Africa. I want thousands of dollars—fifty thousand dollars. Give it me!"

Horton was still more alarmed. "Don't do anything rash, you young fool," he ordered. He had a bright idea. It was obvious that he could not handle Kaspa in his new frame of mind, but he thought he knew some one who could. "Let's talk it over with Mrs. Marley; she is a sensible woman, and may be able to make you see reason. Will you do that?"

Kaspa agreed. He did not mind with whom he talked it over as long as too much time was not lost; discussion would make no difference to his plans.

Horton hurried to dress himself, while his servant put through a call to Rosewood to warn Mrs. Marley of their coming. The journalist had an uneasy fear that something had gone badly wrong at Honeydale, but he was almost afraid to set his fears at rest by asking Kaspa. When at last he did so, during their drive to the northern part of the city, he was relieved and surprised at Kaspa's reply. He had just got tired of it, he said, and decided to come away. Sefton was in accord with his decision, but he had left without telling his tutor.

Horton had many things to ponder as he drove his reticent charge. He had not felt his confidence in himself so shaken since the death of old Denison Starke.

* * *

"And what do you propose to do in Africa when you return there?" asked Mrs. Marley curiously. "You will not go living like an animal again, I suppose?"

Kaspa had not given the matter much thought. He longed for the free and open veld, the things he knew about him and the sounds of the wild in his ears. In that environment he would be happy. Let him but get there and he would decide upon his manner of life; at the moment it mattered little what that should be. He intimated these thoughts to the old lady who sat stiffly upright upon the luxurious couch in the drawing-room at Rosewood, looking out at the summery garden through the open glass doors.

"All this you will leave," she said, waving her hand at the scene out of doors. "Here is luxury and refinement—but I suppose it has no appeal to you; grandeur and exhilaration is what you prefer."

Kaspa assented to that; this woman understood him better than most. He craved the majestic loneliness of untrammeled nature, the physical satisfaction of hard effort and spartan ease.

"Long habit is difficult to break, we know that," put in Horton, "but a few years of life in Canada would make you loth to return to the wilderness."

"I am afraid of that," Kaspa told him. "Much more of this life, and I shall be unable to fend for myself on the veld. That is one reason why I have decided to go."

The journalist devoted his best powers to a description of the joys of his favorite city which would have delighted the heart of an advertising expert. He then turned his attention to other parts of the civilized world with which he had formed some acquaintance, and pointed out that these places were within reach of moneyed people.

Mrs. Marley put a stop to this dissertation; she saw that Kaspa was listening with politeness but without enthusiasm.

"It is no use, James," she said decisively, "the boy has made up his mind; you will not alter it. He must go back to his beloved Africa and see if it is still all that his memories picture it. Perhaps we may see him back in Toronto before very long. Happiness is a state of mind, and his mind has altered since the days when he lived like a primitive man among the animals."

She smiled upon the lion-man with her kind old eyes. "We shall always be ready to welcome you, Kaspa, if ever you change your mind."

Horton acquiesced; he recognized the wisdom of the old lady's judgment. If this craving of Kaspa's could not be subdued it was better to let him indulge it. In all probability he would grow tired of the wild life and long for the peace and plenty of Honeydale.

He rubbed his hands in his brisk, businesslike way.

"Well, well, we have received good advice, Kaspa; let us act upon it. Now tell me your plans, my boy, and I will do my best to help. What are you going to do with your property, for a start? There is Rosewood and Honeydale to be cared for."

Kaspa was quite clear upon that point. He wanted Sefton to manage his property, to live at Honeydale and receive five thousand dollars a year for his trouble. Horton shook his head at that; the salary was unnecessarily large; but when Kaspa went on to say that he would be obliged if Horton would keep an eye on his business affairs and accept a like remuneration, the journalist was better pleased.

That was settled satisfactorily. Kaspa insisted that Mrs. Marley retain possession of Rosewood for the remainder of her life. He had no use for the place, and she would be the best tenant he could get. The old lady was easily persuaded by the two of them.

"I myself," said Kaspa, "want fifty thousand dollars sent to the bank at Chola. I don't suppose I shall use that much, but it may come handy."

Horton remembered Kaspa's income, and wondered what was to be done with it. It saddened him to think that the money would not be put to good use. "I have thought of that," said Kaspa. "There is a society in Chicago for the protection of wild animals in all parts of the world. That society shall draw my income as though it were myself, and do what it thinks fit with it."

An argument ensued over that, but Kaspa was adamant. It was his money, and he would do what he liked with it. Horton surrendered eventually. He telephoned the solicitors, and made an appointment to have all these affairs fixed up.

KASPA took leave of his great-aunt. There were tears in her eyes as she blessed him.

"Remember, Kaspa, I am always your friend. You may depend upon me as long as I live, and before I die I hope to see you again."

He kissed her on the forehead, an unusual demonstration for him, and said good-by to her and Rosewood, the home of his family, but no home of his. A few minutes later he was signing papers and making arrangements for the journey back to the only life he loved.

After he had lunched with Horton he set out to hear news of the two lions he had purchased and which he intended to take back to Africa with him.

A telegram to Port Perry elicited the reply that the lions had been delivered at Honeydale, where Sefton had taken charge of them. Kaspa was in a quandary. He hated to leave his new friends behind him, but the thought of returning to Honeydale was equally repugnant to him. If he could get the lions to Toronto, it would be simple to arrange for them to be shipped to Chola. Kaspa had discovered that among men all things could be had for money.

Horton had returned to his office, and the lion-man was free to follow his own devices. He had learned to drive a car after a fashion; he decided to hire one and drive to Honeydale, where, with the exercise of a little caution, he could gain access to his four-footed friends without coming in contact with any members of the house-party.

Once he had speech with the lions they would do as he told them; he would bring them back with him and have cages made for them in Toronto.

He procured a car from a garage and drove to Port Perry, where, not being afflicted with nerves, and having little respect for the rules of the road, he was fortunate to arrive intact just before nightfall.

The guests were down by the lake consuming cold drinks and listening to the raucous strains of a gramaphone.

Sefton and Madeline were both under the impression that Kaspa was wandering somewhere in the woods. Neither of them had made any reference to the events of the previous night.

Sefton was feeling a trifle ashamed of his outburst, and had decided to talk to Kaspa more reasonably when he returned.

After all, perhaps no great harm had been done. Madeline might have been only flirting with the boy, and Kaspa, who had always listened to his tutor, might be disposed to be guided by him on this occasion.

He must certainly talk it out with him calmly; it was not fair to let his feelings come into the matter.

Madeline awaited Kaspa's return contentedly. She had no doubts of him. She loved him, and he loved her, with a strength beyond the capability of ordinary men; of that she felt sure. He was such a strange wild creature, it was natural he should go off to his beloved woods to think about his new emotions and straighten out his unruly thoughts. She wondered if he had seen Sefton again after that encounter on the veranda. The Englishman looked tired and unhappy, as though he had been up all night.

Madeline was sorry for him, but what could she do? She knew he was in love with her, though she had never encouraged him. She hoped he would be like all the others and forget about her before long—go away and marry some other girl and laugh over his infatuation for the unresponsive Madeline.

She must see Kaspa as soon as he returned and find out exactly how matters stood. That there would be considerable opposition to this love-affair she knew, but she had no fears on this subject. Kaspa and she loved each other; the opinions of other people mattered little; she did not think the lion-man one who would be easily turned from his happiness.

She talked gayly with the others by the lake, waiting for her sweetheart, having no qualms for a future that had suddenly become spangled with hope and rapture.

Kaspa was stealing through the grounds searching for his lion friends. In a little paved yard by the stables he found them. They both lay dead in their cage, and he saw immediately that they had been shot.

He stood there looking at his dead friends, butchered helpless in their prison, and slowly his eyes lost their human look and took on a yellow glare.

He turned and walked towards the sound of dance music, and his gait had become curiously slinking and silent.

HALF-WAY to the lake he encountered Sefton, who was bound for the house to order more drinks.

Sefton was pleased to see him. "I am so pleased you have returned, Kaspa!" he cried. He took his friend by the arm. "Now look here, old man, you must forget what I said last night. I was not myself. I want to talk the whole matter over with you. I think I can convince you to take a sensible view of things."

He paused, watching the lion-man's face, for it was obvious that Kaspa had not understood a word he had said. He remembered the lions, and his face became worried as he thought of the explanation he must make.

Kaspa spoke, and his words were scarcely intelligible. "Who shot my lions?"

Sefton turned pale. He held on to Kaspa with all his strength. "Keep calm about it, old chap; you must try to be reasonable," he said quickly.

Kaspa looked a question. It was the question he had asked before, and Sefton knew that he must answer immediately.

"My God! I was afraid of this!" he groaned. "Listen, Kaspa: will you promise not to do anything on the spur of the moment? I can explain everything, old fellow, but you must give me time." His urgent sentences died into silence; he took a deep breath and plunged into the tale.

It was sufficiently absurd. The lions had been delivered that afternoon and Sefton had taken charge of them. He had found it necessary to go into the town for supplies and during his absence Sheila had expressed a wish to see the lions. Reeves had protested that they were dangerous, but had finally consented to escort her, having first provided himself with Sefton's shotgun loaded with buckshot, "in case of accidents."

When the sightseers arrived before the cage the lions had become very savage, throwing themselves against the door, which Reeves did not consider strong enough to resist their onslaughts. He might have retreated, but was convinced that the lions would escape and ravage the countryside. He had therefore thought it his duty to shoot them. When Sefton returned Reeves had expressed his sorrow at the occurrence, and had tendered a check for the value of the lions.

When Sefton had finished, Kaspa looked long at him without a word, then he turned and continued his progress towards the lake, taking Sefton with him like a child.

The four of them were seated in cane chairs near the edge of the water. They had been playing tennis, and were still in their white garments. At the sight of Kaspa, Reeves sprang to his feet and stood facing him, his hands in his pockets. Madeline uttered a little cry of welcome, but the others were silent. They were oppressed by a premonition of impending tragedy; there was something deadly in Kaspa's expression and the inexorable way

in which he dragged Sefton with him, but only Reeves thought of the lions at that moment. He had expected some such denouement as this ever since he had yielded to the impulse to shoot Kaspa's pets in his absence.

He did not regret his action. He disliked the lion-man intensely, and had no intention of allowing his fiancée to run the risk of being killed by the wild beasts that this savage had purchased with the purpose, as he had declared, of liberating them in the grounds of Honeydale. He had acted in his customary high-handed manner, but, having paid for the damage he had done, was not disposed to grovel for forgiveness. He did not look upon Kaspa as an adult, but rather as a child under guidance of his elders, and had no particular fear of his resentment.

The memory of the lion-man's exploits in the circus arena was disturbing, but this half-civilized animal could not deal with men as he had with his fellow beasts. Nevertheless, he was carrying a revolver in the pocket of his blazer, and he had every intention of using it if he were obliged to. No one could blame him for protecting his life.

He confronted Kaspa, a slight smile on his square face. Kaspa controlled himself by a great effort. He spoke slowly and clearly, and his voice, though thick, was distinct.

"You have shot my lions. Why?" he demanded. His lips writhed in a soundless snarl, and Reeves paled slightly under his tan. "They were my friends," the lion-man continued. "You killed them; I will kill you."

Madeline gasped, a sound of terror and distress, but Kaspa did not look at her. All his attention was riveted on the man who faced him with his right hand hidden from sight. He stood glaring at the stockbroker with his terrible yellow eyes, and slowly his knees bent until he was crouched with his fingers touching the ground. Then the last vestige of civilization departed from Kaspa and left him pure lion. He growled and swung his head, a gesture indescribably menacing. Reeves, white and sweating at the thought of what might happen if this beast got its hands upon him, stepped back and drew his revolver.

The girls screamed, and Lucian Marley half rose, irresolute, feeling that he must throw himself upon the madman and restrain him, but fearing his own death in the act.

Sefton rushed at Kaspa again and clung to him. "For God's sake, Kaspa!" he screamed. "It's murder; they will hang you for it!" Kaspa threw him off, and, with lightning speed, rushed and sprang. The revolver cracked; the bullet struck him in the shoulder, but it takes more than a revolver-bullet to stop a charging lion.

Reeves, with a boxer's skill, ducked and guarded, but no guard was proof against those terrific sweeping blows. Kaspa had forgotten all that Sefton had taught him; his tactics were those of the lion. Reeves got his head away from a sweeping stroke, but a second one, delivered with bewildering speed, caught him in the ribs. He went reeling, and collapsed like a stuffed sack.

Kaspa was on him in an instant. He raised the inanimate body above his head and, bending his knee, prepared to bring Reeves down upon that member with all his colossal strength. He was roaring now, short coughing roars that echoed about the wooded shores of the lake in terrifying fashion.

To the sickened onlookers there seemed no hope of saving Reeves, but Madeline's

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beauty could do what man's strength could not. She flung herself upon Kaspa, wound her arms about his neck and, pulling herself upwards off the ground, fastened her lips on his. The lion-man tried to shake loose her hold, but, burdened as he was, he could not get rid of her. In a moment the wild glare began to die out of his eyes; he shook his head slightly like a man awakening from a heavy sleep. Then a frown gathered upon his forehead. He jerked his head backwards from that clinging embrace, and spoke in a rumbling, husky voice.

"All right, all right, I won't kill him."

Madeline saw the human sanity in his face. She unclasped her arms and sank fainting at his feet, and Kaspa, with an easy effort, threw the struggling form of Harland Reeves out into the lake. Sefton and Lucian hastened to rescue him. As afterwards transpired, he had several ribs broken, and was unable to swim on account of these injuries. Kaspa bent and picked up the fainting girl in his arms. He looked deep into her eyes for a moment, then he carried her to a chair and set her in it.

He turned and ran quickly up the bank into the trees. In a moment he had vanished from sight, and he did not hear the faint voice that called "Kaspa!" behind him.

Sefton did not waste time upon Reeves; he abandoned him to the ministrations of his friends and sprinted for the house. He hoped to intercept Kaspa, and he was in time to catch him as he climbed into his car. Sefton stood in front of the radiator. "Where are you going?" he gasped. "Don't clear off like that! I have things to say to you, and you are hurt—there is blood on your sleeve."

Kaspa smiled and shook his head as he started the engine.

"But, Kaspa," cried his friend, "don't leave me like this, old man. Haven't we been pals? What have I done that you should go off without a word? I know you are going back to Africa; I can feel it—and I want to come with you." Kaspa shook his head again. He extended his hand, and Sefton came round the car to grasp it.

"Stay here and marry Madeline; settle down at Honeydale, and be happy. I have made provision for you."

He gave Sefton a long look from his wonderful eyes, now filled with a softer light, shook free his hand, and let the car leap forward. Martin Sefton stood looking after the retreating car with tears in his eyes. He wondered if that were to be the last time he would shake hands with Kaspa Starke, the lion-man.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VOICE OF THE WILD

THE little coasting steamer entered the harbor of Chola to land one passenger. He was a huge golden-haired young man dressed in white duck, and carrying a suitcase in each hand. He turned his back upon the curious wharf loungers and made straight for the resident commissioner's office. Robert Parkes, a white-haired, somewhat feeble man, was commissioner. He had succeeded Loudon Grant, whose dissipated doings had eventually reached the ears of his chiefs, and resulted in the one-time resident commissioner being reduced in rank and relegated to that duty of commissioner at Nyoka which Martin Sefton had once held.

Kaspa was glad to find a stranger in authority; some one who did not know his history and would not be likely to interfere with his projects. He introduced himself as a Canadian, traveling for pleasure, and announced his intention of making his way through the Bomogo country into Portuguese territory, where his father had once had a mission station.

His papers were all in order, and Parkes was pleased to offer him all the assistance in his power. He also extended the hospitality of his house, but Kaspa was not anxious to stay at the coast. He declared his intention of leaving for the interior that day if he could make necessary arrangements.

"I am afraid that will be impossible," said Parkes, "unless you could purchase a truck and travel to Nyoka. There you might pick up the carriers you need and leave your truck for sale or return to Chola; but to do that you need to have some knowledge of the country and the native language."

"You forget that I was born here," said Kaspa. "I told you my father was a missionary across the border."

The commissioner smiled. That simplified matters. His guest probably knew more about this district than he did, for he had been here only a few months.

Kaspa got his motor truck—a rattletrap concern, the property of an Indian trader. It was good enough for his purpose. At dusk that night he drove out of the station upon the white sandy road to Nyoka, and Parkes would have been horrified had he

known that Kaspa was alone on the lorry, without servant or guide.

The palm groves and the sand changed to thorny bush and red earth. The sky was dark blue and strewn with stars, and a whispering wind blew in his face from off the high veld. By midnight the bush was beginning to open out and there were long glades sleeping in the starlight.

Kaspa saw zebra, impalla, wildebeeste—all the animals of the veld, but one, and that one the finest. A little stream crossed the road, and there he stopped his engine and rested, listening to the sounds of the night. The stream must be a tributary of the big river, and he wondered if he had ever crossed it further down where it joined the Nyoka.

He stayed there a long time, like one in a dream, listening to the old remembered sounds of the night to which he had been so long a stranger. Cicadas rasping, tree-frogs chirping, the yelp of a distant jackal, and the hunger-cry of a hyena—all had a message for him; and then suddenly he heard the sound for which he had been waiting.

There were four of them, his keen ear told him, and they were coming upwind in his direction. The wild melancholy call sighed and rumbled among the thorn trees, just as it had done in the days when Kaspa had heard it and shuddered, a helpless cub with only Kali to protect him from the authors of that dreadful sound.

They came nearer and nearer, and Kaspa leaned against the wing of the lorry waiting. He found himself trembling as the lions approached. Would they recognize him as one of them, or did the man scent cling to him so strongly that they would run from him in disgust?

Presently he saw dim slouching figures crossing the road ahead. He raised his voice and gave the greeting call. The lions stopped, and one turned towards him. It was a fine old yellow-mane, evidently the pack-leader.

Kaspa called again, and the lion answered. There was a note of enquiry in his voice as he came down the road towards the dark lorry. "A friend, a friend," Kaspa grunted. "Greeting, brother, what hunting?" But the lion had stopped. A startled snort broke from him, and he retreated at a trot into the bush. Kaspa heard him telling his followers of the trap by the roadside—the scent of man combined with the voice of a lion.

Kaspa suffered a spasm of fury. This was what man's life had done for him; he had lost touch with the wild and become an outcast from both lives alike. He wrenched off his civilized clothes and stood naked in the cool wind. From a suitcase he took a belt, an old monkey-skin girdle and a hunting-knife in a brass-studded sheath, the finest that money could buy.

In a few minutes he was attired once again as Kaspa the lion-man, and as such he strode off into the bush without a backward glance at the lorry and its contents. He was free, free at last. The long months of waiting dropped from him with his civilized garments; he slipped through the thorns on bare noiseless feet, and unconsciously his throat shaped and constricted itself to a language as wild and remote from the speech of man as the veld itself.

Kaspa went forward through the darkness, treading like a lion and grunting the warning of his presence to those abroad in the night. He headed for the upper Nyoka and the cave in the donga. It had been his intention when he left the coast to travel by lorry as far as a road existed and then strike out on foot. He had pictured himself rejoining his old companions, not as a lion, but as a man, a superior being who might enjoy the privileges of humanity with the freedom of the wild animal.

The Bomogo would sell him land, and he could settle down as a respectable colonist whose nocturnal activities were of no concern to any one but himself. All these plans had now been abandoned. It was easy enough to make them in the commonsense atmosphere of a ship's smoking-room, but the smell of the bush in his nostrils, and the call of the kings of the veld, had in a moment stripped the veneer of civilization from him and left him a wild lion again, who could be content with nothing but absolute freedom from the ways of man.

He regretted nothing. His experiences in Canada had taught him the cunning and power of man, and he would use that knowledge for the benefit of himself and his pack. At will he could resume the habiliments of humanity and penetrate into the cities, and with his great wealth procure those things which might be necessary to himself and his friends. Horton had not done him a bad turn when he captured him and shipped him into another world than the one he knew.

He pushed steadily onwards, disregarding the many attractions about him. His purpose was to reach the highlands as soon as possible, for he was consumed with anxiety for the fate of his old companions,

of whom he had heard nothing since that day when they roared their farewells along the river-bank to the captive held fast in net and ropes.

THE morning found him still trekking. He had slaked his thirst at the river and was now feeling the wind of the higher levels upon his face. He was tired and hungry; he no longer possessed that extraordinary endurance which had once been his, but he comforted himself with the belief that it would return. He had kept his muscles pliant, and his body fit, during the period of his captivity. Occasionally he saw traces of the Bomogo, and once a herd of cattle streaming out to graze in the early dawn; but he made long detours to avoid observation, and the natives had no knowledge that the lion-god had returned to his hunting-grounds.

When the sun was high he curled up in a thicket and slept, awakening again with the cool breeze of evening and resuming his journey. When the first star glittered in the dusky sky he reached the waterhole where Cloete had camped long ago, and from there he saw the tall hills like a wall across the horizon. He made his way to the water and lay down to drink his fill and rest. The object of his quest was at hand and now again those doubts oppressed him. How would Dogo and Ruka receive him? He was not the same Kaspa that had been taken from them over two years ago; his mind had altered, and for all he knew something fundamental in his make-up had altered with it.

There was the aura of man about him, and a wild lion might well refuse to recognize his old playmate in the restrained, thoughtful person who assumed the garb of the wild but reeked of men and cities. He lay watching the water running beneath his face, through that pool wherein he had often bathed and watched the elephants at their play. The old horror and despair came upon him as he looked at the tree to which he had been tied while his enemies gathered to discuss his fate about their cooking-fires.

To this spot he had come after his first attack upon the Bomogo manyatta, and he felt again the contempt of man that had been bred of that experience. He had been a different Kaspa in those days, wild and free and supremely confident. No world but that of the veld and forest existed for him, and now he had traveled in steamships and motor cars, dined in hotels and patronized theaters. Could it be possible that they would take him back again as their friend and leader?

The velvety darkness deepened, gloom settled about the river valley, and fireflies began to flit through the shadows. Suddenly arose a sound upon the night. "Oo-aargh, oo-aargh, oo-aargh-h-h, argh-argh-argh-h!" Beginning on a high crescendo note it pealed out, was repeated three times, and followed by a series of diminishing roars on a melancholy, falling scale.

Kaspa leaped to his feet and stood straining his ears. He knew that voice; often had he heard it in his waking hours and of late in his dreams. It was Ruka sounding the rallying call for the night's hunting. He threw back his head and answered —a slightly tremulous and too eager cry perhaps, but none the less a true roar such as can only be uttered by the king of beasts upon his own domain. There was a moment's silence, and then a chorus of sound came in waves out of the blackness. There was surprise and a sort of hunger in the questing notes of it. Kaspa knew that afar in the night lithe forms were in motion towards him.

Motionless he stood, his heart pounding in his breast as he awaited the realization of his hopes or their bitter disappointment. A long dark form came out of the trees and paused to gaze. A low enquiring grunt came from it. Kaspa replied with the one sound, "Ruka!" Ruka dashed at him.

In a moment they were rolling over and over like a pair of cubs, pulling and patting. The deep purr of the lion resounded throughout the glade. Dogo came hurrying to join that gleeful wrestle on the soft Kikuyu grass. Kaspa extricated himself and sat up; the lions crouched at his feet mewing and purring like a couple of big cats.

He himself was acting likewise, and the man-laugh was bubbling upon his lips, mixed with the hoarse rasping language of his friends. A big lioness and two cubs sat watching that meeting with wide eyes as Zito frisked about Kaspa like a puppy.

Then began explanations such as could be made between creatures who had no language but that of grunts and thought-impulses. Kaspa had escaped; he had returned to his friends, and all was well. The lions recovered their dignity and became grave and reserved as was their normal habit. Dogo called forward his new mate, Hiko, and two cubs, who were fine young fellows like their father.

Hunting had been good during the past year. The Bomogo had not troubled them, and no hunters had visited the district. Zito would produce cubs soon, and the pack would be strong and numerous. Now that Kaspa had returned to lead them they would thrive mightily. This was good country, and the rains had been regular since the big drought.

Ruka saw no reason to leave these hunting grounds, although the others had been in favor of a visit to the lower veld. What did Kaspa think? At once he slipped back into the position of leader and advisor; it was as though his long absence in the haunts of men had never been.

On the question of a change of locality Kaspa reserved his judgment. He intended to bring all his knowledge of man and his customs to the assistance of his lion friends, and since the lions' only danger was from the Bomogo and their like, he desired some refuge where no natives dwelt and where he would indeed be king of the wilderness.

These were matters for future consideration; at present he was hungry, and a meal was yet to provide. They went up against the wind, quartering the veld for the scent of game. It was a fortunate night's hunting a good augury for Kaspa's resumption of leadership.

When he charged down upon the panic-stricken zebra and drove a fat stallion into the jaws of the waiting lionesses, he felt once again the thrill of the chase and the joy of accomplishment. Raw meat was strange to his palate, but he did not contemplate building a fire and cooking it, as he might have done by drilling with a hard stick in the powdery bark of a decaying tree. Henceforth he must eschew all man's habits and become again a true creature of the wild. He cut a liberal supply of meat from the haunch of the kill and sat down among his comrades to eat and be thankful.

WHEN the lions were full fed and lay about round the kill to await the coming of day, Kaspa returned to the subject in his mind. He advocated a move, but not downward; upwards. That startled them. Uuwards lay the thick forest, and above that the bare slopes of the mountains. It was unknown territory, and daunting.

It was just this remoteness that appealed to Kaspa. So far as he knew, no natives inhabited those grassy slopes that he could see above the forest line, and if game abounded there it would be an ideal spot for the pack to live in; but lions do not like forest, and there was ten miles of it at least before they could reach open country again.

He determined to explore the mountain by himself before leading his friends to these unknown heights. During the day Kaspa rested in the cave, but with the evening he arose and took leave of his friends, promising to return within forty-eight hours at the most.

He struck out into the forest, choosing the elephant-trails that ran onwards to the mountains. Through the dense undergrowth, and under the huge branching trees, he walked with his long, loping stride that devoured the miles, that made no sound upon the soft damp earth of the trails.

He was cautious and alert, making full use of nose and ears, for there was little light to see by. The big animals were abroad upon their nightly business. In the glades bush-buck and buffalo grazed; the elephant herds were stripping the young trees of their tender shoots, and solitary rhinoceros browsed among the cactus plants, where rocky soil made openings in the canopy of leaves. Kaspa avoided these monsters by circuitous progress.

The forest was a maze of twisting trails, and where one might not serve it was easy to find another going approximately in the desired direction. He met leopards slinking like shadows among the bushes, and they gave him the trail. Occasionally a big python slid along the branches above his head, hunting the luckless monkeys among their roosts; and Kaspa was wary of the reptiles, for he knew that not even the strength of the lion can prevail against those sinewy coils.

Towards dawn he emerged upon open veld, having traveled many more miles than he need have done had his course been direct. He sat down on the banks of a hurrying stream and waited for the light. The tops of the trees were concealed in swirling mist which clung to the whole face of the mountain. It was cold and damp, even when the rolling chorus of the colobus proclaimed the advent of day, the sun was invisible.

Kaspa walked steadily uphill through the mist which hid everything but the coarse tussocky grass at his feet. Within an hour the mist began to rise and the fiery sun broke through. The hillside cleared like magic, and Kaspa, standing upon the top of a rise, could see his surroundings. Below him was the line of the forest like a green

wall; above, three miles away, a jumble of rocks and boulders and volcanic mud, upon which a few straggling thorns grew. To either side—a broad belt across the mountain—was veld; coarse and luxuriant, dotted with little clumps of bush and patches of forest trees.

Its breadth was perhaps six miles, its length incalculable, and Kaspa was overjoyed to see scattered upon its expanse the forms of zebra, kongoni, and gazelle. There were several hundred of them in plain view, and it followed that along the slopes which he could not see there were many thousands, for the grass was green and tasty, and where one beast came others would follow. They must get up from the plains by a roundabout course which avoided the forest, he reasoned; perhaps they had come right over the top of the mountain through the snowfields.

He surprised a reed-buck couched in the grass beside a stream, but though he chased it, it outdistanced him easily over the rough footing. Kaspa extended his arms to the sky and laughed aloud. The air was keen and refreshing, and the sun was warming his muscles. This was fine country and devoid of enemies; it was the place he had dreamed of.

He set out to hunt a gazelle, for by this time he was in need of food, but at the end of a mile run he found himself exhausted and the gazelle still fresh. The altitude and the tussocky grass were against him; he would need to get acclimatized before he could match these creatures on their own ground.

He set off to explore the country. In one direction the strip of veld terminated in a huge ravine, at the bottom of which a river ran furiously; the other way it gradually pinched out between the lava beds and the encroaching forest. He now estimated the extent of the hunting-ground at about twelve miles, by six at its broadest part. It was full of game which, supposing they did not vacate the place when the lions arrived, would provide good hunting for the pack for years to come. He pushed up into the barren, rock-strewn lands above. There the soil was red and powdery, seamed with huge gullies, and armored in places with a crust of lava, feet in thickness.

Some of the rocks were huge as houses, and in a jumble of these he found a fine cave, from the sandy floor of which a view could be had of the veld and the distant forest-line. There were dik-dik among the washaways, and he managed to kill one with a stone. He sat down outside the cave with the country spread below him like a map, and made his meal. Afterwards he scouted up behind the cave and found the same conditions prevailing, until in the distance he saw the lava speckled with snow. There were plenty of rock-rabbits about, and some leopards that he supposed preyed upon them, but he saw no spoor of larger beasts.

He did find the print of a huge foot which was manlike, but he was convinced that it had been made by an enormous baboon. The ape-folk did not worry Kaspa, and he thought little of this indication that the heights were inhabited by a race of baboons larger than any he had encountered. Before midday he was trekking down the mountain again, full of the joyful tidings of his discovery and eager to lead his friends to the new hunting-ground.

He regained the cave in the donga that evening and lost no time in describing his adventures to the attentive lions. They were unwilling to exchange the country they knew for this strange land where the rock-rabbits lived, but their faith in Kaspa was such that they unhesitatingly obeyed his commands.

The following night he led them through the forest to the higher veld, and so on to the cave he had found for them. Once the move was made the lions began to like their new surroundings. The game was not wild, and the dark misty nights made hunting easy. The cold was not so bad, for they were awake and busy at night, and during the day the sun shone fiercely on the mountain.

It was possible to walk about in the mist until the sun was high, for mountain mornings were at least as dark as moonlit nights. No other lions inhabited this district, and of man there was no trace. The buffalo roamed about the veld until late in the day, and elephants could frequently be seen watering at the stream under a cloudless sky.

Man, the universal enemy, had not made his presence respected in this wild spot, and the beasts were unafraid. But if man had not yet appeared, there was his prototype in the huge apes that lived among the rocks and ravines of the higher slopes. They were a race of giant baboons, such as may sometimes be found in the big mountain forests of the northern country.

The first time Kaspa met them, he was astonished. Proceeding along the edge of the ravine upon one of his usual tours

of exploration, he caught sight of animals upon the further bank. In common with most animals, Kaspa preferred to observe rather than be observed. He sank down behind a boulder and waited for the moving objects to come into plain view.

There were a score of them—dog-faced baboons, hopping in grotesque attitudes along the bank, turning over rocks and stones, searching for grubs. About half a dozen were enormous brutes, twice as big as any baboon Kaspa had seen. The males were like small gorillas, about five feet six in height, broad as the strongest man, and long armed. Their jaws were equipped with fangs as thick and sharp as those of the hyena, and their little red eyes were bright and vicious. Kaspa recognized that here was a foe that might well dispute his supremacy to the lordship of the mountain hunting-grounds. He knew the habits of the creatures: that, like men, they traveled in packs and were ready to band together for defense or attack, that they were quick and fierce and could climb as well as himself.

He went off back to the cave to tell his friends of his discovery. The lions were not much interested. It did not occur to them to fear the aggression of monkeys, but Kaspa wondered if it was the presence of these brutes that had caused man to shun this excellent grazing-ground. He determined to keep a watchful eye upon the doings of the baboons and to avoid contact with them as far as possible. It was inevitable that they should encounter the baboons sooner or later, and the meeting took place a few days later despite Kaspa's best efforts to prevent it.

One evening he came out into the fading light with his comrades about him, and, standing on the rocky platform before the mouth of the cave, raised his voice in the roar which should announce to all and sundry that the kings of the veld were about to begin their night's hunting.

At once the rocks echoed with the barks and screams of a troupe of baboons that had been playing within a few yards of the cave. A half-grown youngster was nearer to Dogo than his mother considered safe, and she promptly dashed forward snarling and screeching to scare the intruder away. She charged within a few paces of the lion, whose dignity was upset by this demonstration of spite upon the part of a mere monkey. Before Kaspa could interfere Dogo had leaped at the baboon. The creature escaped with extraordinary agility, but its unfortunate cub was caught by the lion and instantly killed. The trouble began immediately. The bereaved mother capered on top of a boulder screaming abuse and sorrow; a big male came dashing round the rock, saw the dead cub, and raised the rallying cry.

The surrounding rocks became alive with leaping, snarling apes. They made concerted dashes at the lions, and when attacked leaped up on to huge boulders where they could not be followed. Ruka stood irresolute, with Kaspa alone keeping his head, making ineffectual efforts to protect them. Half a dozen baboons leaped down upon him, and he was soon engaged in a desperate fight in which only his speed and the flashing blows of his knife saved him from being torn to pieces.

The cubs were not so fortunate. In a moment they were overwhelmed as others of the enemy came to the help of their fellows. They were dragged, snarling and fighting furiously, away into a ravine, where a dozen pairs of fierce jaws and tearing hands made an end of them. The lionesses came rushing back to the rescue, but although several baboons felt the weight of their thrashing paws, the cubs had been carried up onto the crags beyond reach of assistance.

Kaspa and his friends gathered in a roaring group, while the baboons with all the savage insolence of their kind bayed insults at them from the surrounding heights. One of the huge brutes was thrashing the body of a cub about in full view of its frantic mother. Hiko charged, leaping vainly at the side of the sheer rock on which the creature stood. Stones and branches were hurled down upon her, and she was powerless to close with her enemies. She drew off, snarling and raging, to rejoin her companions in the clear space before the cave. Kaspa had sustained a severe bite in the leg, and all the lions bore marks of the conflict.

Between them they had killed seven of the baboons, and thenceforth those creatures showed no desire to battle on the ground with their powerful antagonists; but Hiko's cubs had been lost, and the fact that these well-grown, heavy youngsters had been carried off so easily gave evidence of the baboons' fighting qualities. The baboons, with all the persistent vindictiveness of the monkey people, had no intention of abandoning the field to their enemies. They stayed on the crags, barking and chattering, throwing such missiles as they could find.

Kaspa tried to make his friends follow him out on to the veld. He realized that the baboons must be taught a lesson or there would be no peace for the lions night or day; and the only way in which this could be done was to inveigle the brutes into the open, where they could not get away from the lions' rush. But Hiko would not leave the dead cubs, although they were twenty feet above her head beyond her reach.

The baboons jeered and exhibited the bodies of their slain foes. Kaspa reflected that it is only the apes and mankind who possess the ability to taunt and infuriate their foes to this extent. Hiko was like a mad creature, and the other lions were in no condition to hear reason. They spent the night stalking to and fro before the cave, replying to the insults of the baboons with threats and ragings.

WHEN morning broke, things were no better. The lions retired to their cave, but the baboons followed them to the entrance and baited them throughout the daylight hours. Every now and then a lion would charge out into the open in a futile effort to catch one of the tormentors, but the baboons had only to leap up the rocks to safety, and not one was punished. By nightfall the lions were frantic and in a humor to vacate the district and return to the lower veld where the Bomogo herded their cattle.

Kaspa was at last able to outline his plan and to secure their cooperation in it. He deduced that the baboons were now confident and unwary, and could be lured into a trap without suspecting it. His plan was simple. They must start out on their nightly prowl, as though too hungry to worry further about the loss of the cubs and their hopes of vengeance. Kaspa felt sure that the apes would follow them out on to the veld, and, once well away from the rocks and trees, they would be in the lions' power. Dissimulation was foreign to the great cats' natures, but at last they listened to their leader and agreed to obey.

When night had fallen they issued from the cave and slunk away to the plain without a backward glance at their jeering enemies. The baboons followed along the tops of the rocks until these came to an end and there was nothing before them but an expanse of grass. They stayed there for a while, chattering insults, until the dun forms of the lions began to fade from sight in the darkness; then they followed, unable to relinquish their amusement even at the cost of their safety.

When the pack was a quarter of a mile out in the grass the baboons were a hundred yards behind them, lolloping along to the number of a hundred or more, emboldened by the cowed demeanor of their foes and bent upon spoiling the night's hunting. Hiko, unable to restrain her rage further, turned to roar at them. That gave them pause, for they suddenly realized that they were far from tree or rock. A shrill excited babbling broke out amongst them, and some of the older males turned back.

Kaspa knew that the time had come. He gave the fighting roar and charged, with the whole pack racing after him. The baboons fled screaming, but the lions caught up with them easily. Striking and leaping, they decimated the flock and destroyed whole families. Some of the bigger apes turned to fight, but here there were no boulders and precipices to facilitate their elusive tactics, and the strength of the lion was too much for their tender frames. The giants among them were a match for Kaspa had he been unarmed, and since their agility and cunning were equal to his, he had difficulty in making openings for his deadly knife thrusts, but they had no notion of how to deal with a lion.

They closed and bit and tore, to be destroyed in an instant by the jaws and claws of the carnivora, against which no softer flesh can prevail. The remnant of the baboon flock regained the rocks with difficulty, leaving a score of their number dead upon the plain.

From that moment the lions were not molested further. The baboons retired further into the hills, and there was peace in the cave among the rocks. Zito produced her litter, hunting was good, and the weather cool and invigorating, but despite these advantages Kaspa was not entirely happy. Memories of his Canadian life began to trouble him. He found himself desirous of seeing Sefton's humorous, eager face again, and feeling the warmth of his man-friend's handclasp. He wondered how things were going in Toronto; if Madeline had forgotten him and consented to make Sefton happy, as he had planned.

He had not forgotten Madeline.

Watching the happy mating of his brothers, he was conscious that there could be no family life for him, and the thought of those few precious moments with the woman who had loved him recurred to him disturbingly. He began to

wonder what would be his ultimate fate. The life of an animal was necessary to him, but he was also a man, with all a man's desires and love of the companionship of friends and human speech. Ideas formed in his mind, and he had no one with whom to discuss them. The routine of hunting and sleeping became monotonous; it led nowhere.

There was something more in life than this business of just living. Kaspa became morose and given to wandering afar in the forest occupied with his own thoughts and longings.

The mating season was now at hand, and everywhere he saw creatures cleaving to each other. Birds were busy constructing their nests, the herd bulls fought and trumpeted under the budding trees, and the wild was filled with the sounds of song and frolic.

In these great purposes Kaspa had no part. He was solitary, a creature divorced from his kind, and since even the old bachelors who had been driven out from the society of their fellows were morose and ill-tempered these days, it was natural that a young and healthy being like Kaspa should feel the urge of the season and his loneliness.

No, he had not forgotten Madeline, and now knew that he would never forget her —that the distance between them but served to make him remember her the more; but things seemed hopeless to him, for with his ignorance of the ways of men and women he was certain that by this time she would have forgotten him.

CHAPTER IX

"THE ABORIGINES' RECLAMATION SOCIETY"

IN A LARGE, handsomely furnished office on King Street, Toronto, two men were talking privately. They were Harland Reeves and Lucian Marley. Lucian was looking worried; his thin, fair face was paler than usual, and there was a nervous, irritable twist to his mouth. Reeves, unperturbed and cynical as usual, watched him with a trace of amusement in his dark eyes.

Lucian was making a confession that cost him an effort. He had acted like a callow fool, and his was not a nature that found it easy to accept ridicule and censure. He had been having a flutter on the Exchange without his brother-in-law's knowledge, wishing to surprise him with the evidence of his perspicacity in the shape of hard cash when the time to clean up arrived. But the time to clean up had not arrived; it was the other people who had evidenced their superior cleverness by helping themselves to over a hundred thousand of Lucian's precious dollars.

He had raised the wind from a moneylender by pretending that he was still Denison Starke's heir, and now the fellow had been making enquiries and had learned that Kaspa stood in the way, and that Lucian's share of the inheritance had been reduced to a beggarly sum. He had given the young man a week to refund the money, otherwise he threatened foreclosure and court proceedings.

Lucian's stepmother could have helped him, but the young man knew better than to apply to her. The old lady had no patience with weakness and folly, and hardly a day passed without her pointing out to her stepson that since he was no longer the heir to a fortune he had better turn out and work for his living. A disclosure of this kind would inevitably result in his being forced into an office to toil from dawn to dark for a pittance—a thought intolerable to the pleasure-loving Lucian.

He appealed for help to Reeves, but the stockbroker was unsympathetic. "Why not have come to me in the first place?" he asked. "I could have told you it was a wildcat scheme. After all, that's my profession, and, having spent a good long time learning to keep out of trouble myself, I really don't see why I should be dragged into it by you."

"I had the inside dope, or thought I had," Lucian told him for the second time. "It looked certain I should make a killing, and you remember you have not been very encouraging when I have come to you to put me on a good thing."

Reeves grinned. He intimated that good things did not grow on gooseberry bushes, and that though the spirit was there, the opposition was also there, and stronger than Lucian was aware of. "I manage to make a modest living by handling other people's wealth, but I have not made any of these killings myself yet," he pointed out.

"Well, anyway, you will have to help me," said Lucian sullenly. "I'll pay you back as soon as I do strike something."

Reeves shook his head. "Too easy!" he remarked. "Money cannot be had for nothing, as you will find out now you want it badly. I might be able to raise the sum.

but it would just about break me; and as for paying it back, when and how?"

Lucian hastened to explain his conviction that he was going to make good, in large quantities, and in the near future. He had made an unlucky shot, but the next one would be a winner; he felt it in his bones.

Reeves cut him short rudely. "Nothing doing. You leave the stock market alone or you'll be a pauper inside a month. There are packs of wolves about looking for lambs like you, and, my, won't they howl when they see you coming! You have no prospects, my good man, and the sooner you realize it the clearer your head will become. Your friend Kaspa is the only man you can apply to. He has plenty, and he certainly doesn't want it out in the jungle. My advice is, go to Africa and tell your troubles to your cousin. He's done you out of about two million; he ought not to boggle at lending you a hundred thousand."

Lucian considered—not the trip to Africa, but the loss of his inheritance. The scowl upon his weak face grew blacker. "Yes, that's true," he murmured. "I should be a rich man if that fool Horton hadn't raked the wild man out of the woods to make a millionaire of him."

Reeves laughed, a hard sound. "Cheer up, I'm in the same boat. Sheila would have had half, and what she gets I get, we being the sort that share our joys as well as our sorrows." Reeves had been married to Sheila for three months now, and they suited each other.

Lucian said, as though speaking aloud his inmost thoughts, "There has been no word from Kaspa since he left Chola. Supposing something has happened to him? For all we know we may both be millionaires as we sit here. He made no will."

Reeves nodded. "I've thought of that. He seems to live perilously, as leader of a lion pack. I have had some news from Africa, although it is little enough."

Lucian stared at him, astonished. "You never told me. What have you heard?" His face was animated beyond its wont by the prospect of hearing something to his advantage.

Reeves told him briefly. He had taken it upon himself to write to the Commissioner of Nyoka, which Sefton had told him was the nearest point to Kaspa's retreat. Loudon Grant had replied that although Kaspa had started off from Chola to visit him, he had not arrived, and his lorry had been found abandoned on the road. It contained the lion-man's clothes, so that it was reasonable to suppose that he had gone back to live in a state of nature among the wild beasts.

The Bomogo reported that no lions were at present living in the old cave on the upper Nyoka, so that no news of Kaspa could be obtained.

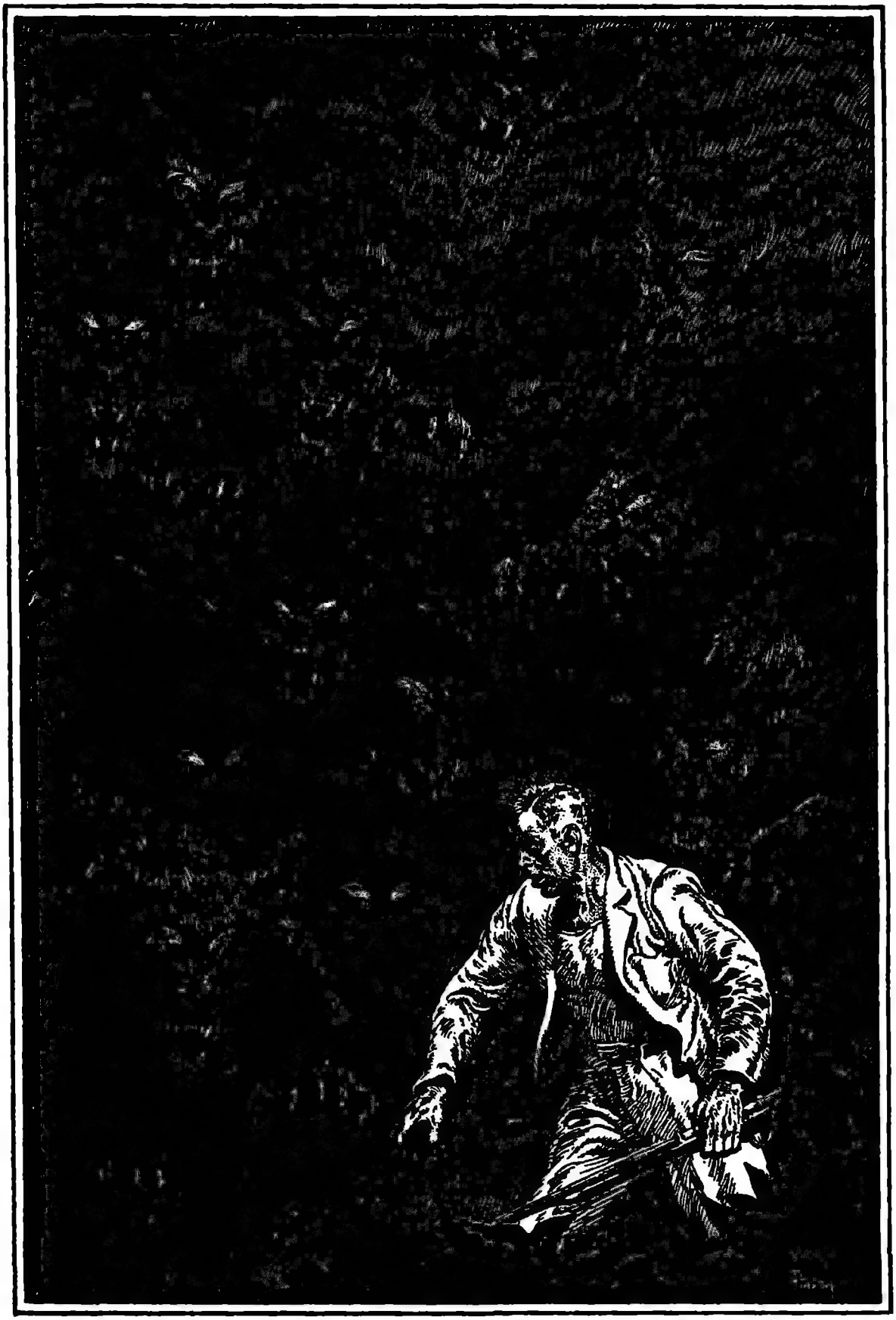
"This is madness!" Lucian stormed. "The fellow might be killed at any moment and we should never know! Then, I suppose, it would take about twenty years before they would let us have the money!"

Reeves concurred. "My opinion is that we should be well advised to look after our interests," he said quickly. "Some arrangement should have been made whereby we could keep in touch with this savage. It is not fair to us as matters stand. I should think the life of a lion is precarious, and, personally, it would not cause me any sorrow to hear that Mr. Kaspa had been eaten by a competitor, or pushed into a jelly by a bull elephant. But I want to hear about it, because it affects my welfare and that of my wife. A man's first duty is to his wife—don't you think so, Lucian?"

Lucian thought that a man's first duty was to himself. His memories of Kaspa had disposed him to think that he was the sort of man who would live to a hundred and ten and survive all the accidents of civilized existence; Reeves' words had thrown an entirely different light upon the matter. Of course, Sefton had always talked as though Kaspa was as safe from harm in the African jungle as he would have been in Toronto, but when one came to think of it there was every prospect of the lion-man paying the penalty of his rashness at any moment. Lucian was immensely cheered at this reflection. He was not naturally callous or unfeeling, but Kaspa was not a man in the ordinary sense of the word, and it did seem ridiculous that a creature about as human as a friendly dog should keep a man out of a fortune.

He had always felt that way about it, and now that Reeves had broken the ice he had no objection to putting his feelings into words. "Well, look here, then, Harland," he said; "don't you think we ought to try and get some reliable information? If the guy's a deader, we must be able to prove it."

Reeves showed him that since Kaspa had survived twenty years of such a life there was no reason to suppose that he



He was just a little human figure, alone in the night among the things that call the night their friend. . . .

had succumbed during the last six months.

LUCIAN sat scowling and biting his nails. "I believe I'll go to this place Nyoka and find out what I can," he grumbled. "It would get me out of the way for a bit in case mother finds out about that business with moneylender, and, after all, a chap couldn't refuse to help his brother in arms, so to speak, when he is in it right up to the neck, could he?"

Reeves sneered. "You're not thinking of joining the lion pack, are you?"

Lucian glared at him, and the stockbroker went on, speaking in a hard, unemotional voice. "You know, ever since that barbarian threw me into Lake Scugog and busted up my ribs I've been thinking I'd like to meet him again. The way I look at it, he's nothing but an animal, and a man has to use some means of protection against wild beasts. I'd like to see if the wonderful Kaspa would play tricks with me if I had a good rifle in my hand and there were no timekeepers or referees."

Lucian paid scant attention to this remark; it was the sort of talk that Reeves indulged in at times. He began wondering where he could raise the money he required as a temporary loan, or if the moneylender would hold off while he went to Africa to borrow from his cousin. He told Reeves he thought he'd try it. The moneylender must know he hadn't a hope of getting the money in a week; that was sheer bluff, he guessed.

He left the stockbroker pondering over a sentence in the letter he had received from Loudon Grant, a passage that more than hinted that Kaspa stood a very good chance of falling a victim to some hunter's rifle if he had any enemies with money to give away.

He must be a queer bird, this Grant, to commit himself like that on paper. Reeves had heard all about the man from Sefton and Horton, and he was aware that Grant must know of Denison Starke's will and the circumstances of the beneficiaries under it. It looked as though Loudon Grant might be an interesting fellow to meet.

Reeves dallied with an idea that had lately entered his mind, the idea of going to Africa to see what had happened to Kaspa. Several people were dallying with that idea at that moment. There was Lucian Marley, explaining the circumstances to the loan shark in his palatial offices on Yonge Street, and there were Madeline Moore and Martin Sefton, talking it over in the drawing-room at Rosewood.

Neither of these two people had enjoyed a day's happiness since that afternoon when Kaspa left Honeydale never to return. Madeline had not grown less fond of him with his absence. Sefton had tried his best to supply the deficiency, but it was useless; the girl was seriously in love with the lion-man, and there was room for no other emotion in her breast at that time, not even pity for the unfortunate young man who cherished for her the same feelings as she cherished for his friend.

A bond of sympathy, born of suffering shared, drew Madeline and Sefton together. The man was convinced he had no chance of winning her, and, true to his finer instincts, he now asked nothing better than to make her happy at whatever cost to himself.

It seemed that Kaspa was essential to the success of this plan, but he had not forgotten his objection to Kaspa as a husband for Madeline. He had hoped to see the girl recover from her infatuation, but it was apparent that Madeline's emotion was more deeply rooted than he had supposed.

She pined visibly for Kaspa, and the passage of the empty months seemed but to increase her melancholy. This state of affairs altered Sefton's attitude. He had been convinced that Madeline could not be happy with Kaspa, he was now equally convinced tthat she would not be happy without him. It followed that Kaspa must be brought back and induced to lead a civilized life as the husband of Madeline Moore.

Sefton was one of those curious people who seem born for self-sacrifice. From his first friendship with Kaspa he had subordinated his own welfare to that of his friend. He had thrown up his position in government service to care for the wild man, and had accepted the position of a paid tutor, surrounded by wealthy and independent people who regarded him as of little account, a situation which could not be soothing to his sensitive nature.

His love for Madeline was of the same passive, altruistic kind as his friendship: he desired nothing more than the happiness of his beloved, and in the establishment of it his contentment would lie. How to bring these two people together was the problem that occuypied his mind to the exclusion of all else.

Madeline, obsessed by her longing for Kaspa, accepted the sympathy of her

suitor without analyzing its origin. She had the unconscious egotism of healthy youth. Of course she knew Sefton loved her, and felt sorry for the hopelessness of his suit, but beside the vigorous personality of the lion-man he was a weak and insignificant figure. She felt the urge of mighty primitive forces drawing her to her natural mate, and the unselfish adoration of the young Englishman was swept aside by that emotional flood.

She mourned aloud. "What can have happened to him? When I think of the perilous life he is leading, my heart dies within me. Can't we make him return, Martin? It seems so long since he went away, and surely he must be longing for companionship and the comforts of civilized life by now?"

She stared at him with dark, miserable eyes, and Sefton almost wept at the failure of his prophecies, for in the first instance he had predicted that Kaspa would not be able to settle back into the life from which they had rescued him, but would come back to his friends a wiser and more contented man. He walked listlessly about the room, his fair face flushed and distressed, his mouth sulky.

"Why is he so unreasonable?" he cried impatiently. "There is everything for him here that man can desire." He glanced at her and checked his petulance. After all, Kaspa would not be the man they loved if he were as other men. "He has gone right back to the wilderness, of course. He is now a lion again, striving to forget that he was ever anything else."

She uttered a low cry of pain. Sefton became contrite immediately. "Forgive me; I didn't mean he had forgotten you," he said quickly. "I have told you his reasons for going: he thought you could never be happy with a man like him, and he therefore deliberately departed out of your life hoping that you would forget him. I suppose he is now trying to forget you for the sake of his own peace of mind."

"But I have not forgotten him and am not likely to do so, as you know," she said quickly. "If he knew it surely he would return to me." She caught him by the arm. "Oh, Martin, it is all so silly! There is nothing but misery in this attempt to thwart the plans of nature. I am his no matter what he does—even if he takes me away to live in a cave in the wilderness. Don't you think that if he knew that he would abandon his foolish idea of running away from me?"

SEFTON forebore to state his convictions that Kaspa's flight had been occasioned fully as much by his longing for the old life as by his reluctance to ruin her happiness. He dissimulated, pointing out the difficulty of their divining the motives of such a man. "Kaspa's training has been so different from that of the rest of us."

He took a couple of turns about the room, while she sat hopelessly regarding him; and then he divulged the scheme which had been slowly maturing in his mind.

"Look here, Madeline; something has got to be done. I have written to Loudon Grant, and to the bank manager at Chola. Nothing has been heard of Kaspa since he deposited his funds and started off in that lorry. It isn't good enough—for all we know, he may be in dire need of my help; and then, I can't stand watching you pining away like that and knowing him to be in ignorance of it. I am going back to Africa to find him." He looked at her inquiringly.

She nodded, "I was hoping you would," she said; and then, frowningly, "I only wish I could come, too."

"Why not?" cried Martin, by no means

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dismayed at the prospect of a long journey in her company. "You are your own mistress."

She shook her head, smiling dolefully. "I haven't the money; my father left me only a pittance—and there is Mrs. Marley to consider. After Sheila married I stayed on here, you know, as companion to her mother; I can hardly leave her in the lurch after all her goodness."

"She would not stop you; she is as keen as we are on getting Kaspa back again; and as for the money, I've got enough—I don't spend a quarter of my salary."

Madeline beamed upon him. "Martin, you're a dear, but even if those difficulties were overcome I couldn't go voyaging round Africa alone with you."

Sefton's face fell; that was just what he had hoped for.

"There is one way it might be done," added the girl pensively: "if I could persuade Sheila to come with me."

Sefton doubted. He did not think Sheila the best of comrades for an African safari, and he was sure that Kaspa did not like her. "Nonsense," said Madeline with wide eyes. "They always got on quite well together. It was Harland whom Kaspa disliked, and I think it was only because they did not understand each other. Harland is quite nice really."

Sefton knew that when Madeline was convinced, you could not argue with her with any hope of success. He also knew that she fancied herself a far better judge of Kaspa's thoughts and motives than his man friend. He accepted her dictum.

Madeline became energetic and excited at the thought of action. Sefton had not seen her look so vivacious for a long time. She must immediately ring up Sheila's flat to see if she were in, and, if so, she must visit her to talk over this proposal. "I do hope she will come!" she cried, her eyes shining with excitement. "I suppose newly married people are not very ready to leave each other to go off on long journeys, but then, Harland might come, too. He needs a holiday, and his partner can look after his affairs while he is away."

Sefton groaned in spirit. He had repented his rashness in confiding his project to the girl. There was no doubt that the atmosphere of jazz and cocktails that the Reeves would introduce into the expedition would be a powerful deterrent to Kaspa's joining them; it would bring the less pleasant aspects of civilization back to his memory, but on the other hand Madeline was a trump card. Produce that dark and tender beauty in the midst of the savage austerity of the wilderness and what wild man could resist her?

He went off down town to find James Horton, his mind more cheerful than it had been for many days. Perhaps the Reeves would not come, and arrangements might be made for a chaperon for Madeline. The thought that he might be the means of bringing happiness to his friend and the woman he loved made Sefton feel like bursting into song. That he was deliberately ruining any chance he might have of winning her for himself did not dismay him, for Sefton realized that he was one of those unfortunate mortals whose desires would always be thwarted, and who could find contentment only in the happiness of others. Women who loved lion-men could not love Martin Sefton. Why not acknowledge it and make the best of it? He understood and sympathized. He had a poor opinion of himself as a lover, but he might retain his self-esteem by proving himself a staunch friend.

Horton understood and sympathized also. He had come to cherish a sincere regard for Martin Sefton, and the thought of Kaspa and his failure to make a civilized man of him rankled in his mind. Horton disliked failure in any one, particularly in himself. Added to this disturbing realization of defeat was a hearty liking for the cause of it, and the desire to do his best for the grandson of his old friend. Horton placed his services and his resources behind Sefton.

"If any one can exercise influence on the young fool, it is you, Martin," he said. "Personally, I think it a mistake not to go alone, but you know Kaspa, and the best way to treat him, so go ahead on your own lines. Count on me for anything you need. I'll get some letters from Ottawa for you—that will help more than a little."

Sefton left him in high spirits, which were not even damped by the news he received that night that not only were the Reeves, but Lucian, to make up the deputation to Kaspa in his wilderness home.

THE next few days were busy ones for what Harland Reeves facetiously termed "The Aborigines' Reclamation Society." Now that some definite effort was to be made to bring Kaspa back to the fold, every one wondered why the truant had been allowed to follow his own devices so long without restraint.

"One would sympathize with his desire to return to Africa and live there as a settler, suitably housed and clothed," Mrs. Marley declared, "but really I do think that we as his relatives should set our faces against the idea of Denison Starke's grandson running about the earth like a wild animal. It isn't decent."

She impressed upon Sefton the necessity of bringing Kaspa back with him. "If you leave him in that country he will go wild again as soon as your back is turned. Get him to Canada and take him for a trip in the North Woods or somewhere where he can have plenty of wild life, in reason. It was a mistake making him stay at Honeydale; the boy was bored, and I don't wonder at it."

Sefton thought that good advice; the old lady had more sense than any of them. He contemplated a honeymoon in Alaska for Madeline and Kaspa, and felt a glow of pleasure in the prospect of their happiness.

Three weeks later "The Aborigines' Reclamation Society" sailed for Cape Town, whence they caught a mail steamer to Dar-es-Salaam. At the Tanganyika port they were held up for a week awaiting the arrival of the coaster that would take them to Chola, but after what was to Madeline a lengthy period of sweltering discomfort she at last found herself nearing the Mecca of her pilgrimage. With the red sunset behind her she looked out over the huge expanse of green bush and distant purple mountains where her friend had his kingdom among the mysterious solitudes, apart from any life of which she could conceive.

It had been impossible in Toronto to visualize the life of a wild African lion, but here, faced with the frightening immensity of the unknown, she could at least estimate the extent of her ignorance. The quiet, watchful natives with straight, handsome features and an air of dignified reserve—which Sefton pointed out to be the peculiar attribute of the nomadic tribes of the interior—were so different from the plump-faced, jovial negroes of the coast that she was obliged to think that when she left the busy highways of commerce and the friendly ocean she would enter into a land as aloof and vaguely disquieting as the people whom it bred.

In Canada, Kaspa had been a stranger, and she had met him upon her own ground, secure in the confidence of familiarity; now positions were to be reversed, and she felt frightened. Would she recognize in the man who had sunk back into the condition of savagery from which he had been rescued, the polite, and by no means uncultured, man she had known at Honeydale?

Well, she had come this far to speak with him, she would carry out her intention; but as it became increasingly apparent that the interview must take place between a natural woodland creature and a city-bred society girl, in a primeval forest, surrounded by the fierce and predatory beasts of the wilderness, she felt the absurdity of her hopes.

If Kaspa could not be held by her charm in its most appropriate setting, it seemed foolish to suppose he would be influenced where everything combined to show her unsuitability as his comrade. She felt inefficient and depressed.

Something of these ideas had occurred to Sefton also, but with his greater knowledge he was more confident. He knew that nowhere did the softer side of life have greater appeal than amongst the austerities of the wilderness. He hoped that by this time Kaspa had worked off his revolt against the artificialities of civilization and begun to appreciate some of its advantages. After all, it was not to be expected that a man who enjoyed the pleasures of friendship, literature, music and all the comforts and conveniences of wealth and position should be entirely satisfied with the life of a brute, however splendid.

Martin hoped to confront Kaspa with all that he had so rashly abandoned in the presence of Madeline Moore. He had reason to suppose she would prove irresistible. Buoyed up with these hopes, he was the most cheerful and optimistic of the party, for the others had their own troubles to keep them from enjoying their holiday to the full.

Sheila was inclined to be disgruntled and fault-finding, for this had not turned out to be the pleasure-trip she had anticipated. Since Dar-es-Salaam she had been hot, and bored, and indifferently catered for. The coasting steamer was uncomfortable and the passengers uninteresting. To make matters worse Harland behaved like a man with something on his mind. His customary insouciant gayety had given place to a pensive, almost sulky reserve, highly uncomplimentary to his young and attractive wife. The stockbroker's depression was by no means unwarranted, had she known the reflections that caused it.

Reeves had started out cheerfully to renew his dispute with Kaspa, or to assure himself of the lion-man's death. It seemed to him ridiculous that Lucian and himself should be kept from the enjoyment of a fortune by a person who, far from administering that fortune for his own benefit, preferred to abandon it to the care of stewards and solicitors and to live the life of a wild animal at no expense whatever.

If the fellow wished to be a lion, he must be treated as a lion, and Reeves had no intention of allowing himself to be done out of two million dollars by a lion! Harland Reeves had fought in France during the war; he had seen too much useless slaughter to place an exaggerated value upon the sanctity of human life. Look at it how you like, Kaspa deserved no mercy. He led the life of a beast, and was the associate of beasts inimical to man.

He had, during a period of famine, led his starving followers against the natives and been the death of them—he admitted to having killed one man himself for the possession of a sheath-knife. Those crimes had been excused upon the score of the perpetrator's ignorance, but that excuse no longer held good.

Kaspa, a civilized man with a certain amount of education, had returned to live with the very creatures who had slain natives in the past, and might be expected to do so again the moment it was to their advantage. That put him beyond the pale; he was not entitled to the protection of the law.

Added to these iniquities, he was keeping others out of money which he himself could not enjoy. Place four million dollars on the head of any man, and make him free game, and how long would it be before some one shot him? Reeves asked himself that question and had no doubt of the answer.

He owed Kaspa no consideration. The wild man had done his best to kill him, and, but for a fortunate accident, would have done so. It was war to the death between them. To give the stockbroker his due, he had no intention of trying to accomplish his enemy's downfall by unfair means.

It had occurred to him that were he to encounter Kaspa in the wilderness the lion-man would attempt to carry out the purpose from which he had been restrained upon the shores of Lake Scugog by Madeline's timely intervention. Reeves wished nothing better, for this time he would be armed with a magazine rifle, with which he would be entitled to protest his life against the onslaught of a wild animal.

He looked to Loudon Grant, the official in charge of the territory, to uphold him in any action he was forced to take, and intended to "sweeten" Grant accordingly.

THIS was all plain sailing to his vigorous mind; but what was causing his usually happy temperament to be overcast was the discovery that Madeline Moore was still enamored of this impossible savage. At Port Perry he had thought it a passing attraction, but if it were indeed something stronger and more deeply rooted, there was going to be an unpleasant sequel to the little shooting affray he intended to stage in the jungle.

To make matters worse, he was convinced that Madeline had saved his life when Kaspa had him helpless in his grasp, and Reeves had a curious code whereby he recognized an obligation to the girl who had done him this good turn. He found it very difficult to decide upon his course of action, and the more he pondered it the more difficult it became. It was no wonder that his demeanor was moody and abstracted.

Lucian was too perturbed in his own mind to notice the behavior of his brother-in-law. Reeves, in an unwise moment, had confided to him the contents of Grant's letter, and ever since dark and terrible thoughts had obsessed the young man's mind. His interview with the money-lender, had been unpleasant.

This person had granted him the respite necessary to journey to Africa to find his wealthy relative, but he had conclusively stated his intention of prosecuting Lucian for obtaining money under false pretenses if the hundred thousand dollars was not forthcoming within three months.

Lucian's mind was filled with misgivings. It seemed to him most unlikely that Kaspa would lend him the sum he required, and even if he did so Lucian was in no better position than he had been before his unfortunate speculation; he was a young man with expensive tastes and without the means to gratify them.

If Kaspa could be removed, all would be well, and though he told himself that such a thought could never be acted upon, he knew in the back of his mind that, once in conversation with Loudon Grant, the affair would be discussed. It would rise between them like a guilty secret between plotters, for Grant, who was not afraid to

put his insinuations upon paper, would be little likely to balk at stating them verbally. And Lucian knew that he had hopes of that, and would be unable to resist the voice of the tempter.

Two million dollars was a lot of money, and men yielded up their lives every day for a less sum. The law of the jungle was, "Kill or be killed!"—Kaspa should understand that—and civilized society was more cruel than the jungle. There was no room for altruism in Lucian's pampered mind, and yet he shrank from the thoughts of bloodshed. He was like the man who profits by the deaths of his fellows in warfare, and yet would not have the courage to sign a single execution warrant.

Influenced by these mixed and conflicting emotions, the party disembarked at Chola and betook themselves to the small hotel.. It was hot, filthy, and the playground of several varieties of noxious insects, among which scorpions were the most frightening and fleas the most obtrusive. Sefton made all speed to arrange transport to Nyoka. He found Jan Cloete, and engaged his services and that of his two lorries.

Armed with the credentials given him by Horton in Toronto, he had no difficulty in procuring the necessary permission and licenses for their safari. The resident commissioner was helpful and sympathetic with these people who had come so far to search for their missing relative. Within a few days the two lorries pulled out on the road to Nyoka, with Cloete in charge.

CHAPTER X

IN KASPA'S HUNTING-GROUNDS

SEFTON was an old campaigner. He had brought a complete outfit, so that their camp on the river under the big shady mohogo trees was comfortable. The girls were glad to rest for a day or two after the long motor journey, while their men folk made final arrangements with Loudon Grant for the safari. Grant was much as Harland Reeves had expected him to be from Sefton's description and the commissioner's letter. They understood each other at once. There was a sun-downer party the second day of their stay at Nyoka, and Reeves and Lucian were the only visitors present.

Sefton did not like Grant, and would not accept his hospitality, but the other two were not so particular. Grant, who prided himself upon his judgment of men, soon came to the conclusion that each of his guests was anxious for a private conversation with him. He remembered the letter he had written under the stimulus of alcohol, and in a moment of recklessness born of disgust at his surroundings.

Was it possible that his hints had fallen upon fertile ground? Since the unfortunate embroilment with another official at the coast, which had resulted in his being put back to this station in the primitive wilderness, Grant had become embittered. He felt he would do anything to get out of it, and, if he were not mistaken, the means was at hand.

When Lucian and Reeves at last rose to go, he called the stockbroker into his office for a private consultation, ostensibly to do with the investment of his savings.

When, an hour later, Reeves rejoined his companions, he wore the satisfied air of a man who has succeeded in ordering affairs to his liking. Lucian stole away to the commissioner's bungalow that night after dinner, but his interview brought him no comfort, to judge by his harassed, furtive expression as he walked back to his tent in the moonlight.

Jan Cloete was the next of Grant's visitors, and the two of them sat up till dawn over a bottle of whisky. The hunter was under an obligation to the commissioner. There was a matter of the death of an Arab headman which Grant had hushed up, but which could even now be resurrected with unpleasant results for the Dutchman.

Deportation was the lightest sentence he could expect if it could be proved that Ali bin Salim had met his end at the hands of his employer in a moment of ungovernable rage. Grant had long used this lever to compel the hunter's compliance to his wishes. He put what he could in Cloete's way, but he demanded a share of the profits of every transaction. The profits of the present undertaking, if brought to a successful conclusion, would be sufficient to make them both affluent, but the job was not to Cloete's liking.

"I do not want to do it, Mr. Grant," he said, shaking his big beard. "I would have done it when I first caught him, for then he was no better than an animal, but I saw him in Chola when he got back from Canada, and he is now a man. It is too much to go hunting a man like he was an elephant."

Grant clucked impatiently. "Don't think about it that way. There must be no suspicion of premeditation; you must make it look like an accident." He considered for a

moment. "Of course the big fellow may do it himself, in which event there will be nothing for you, Cloete, and your hands will be clean, but supposing he were to get in a mix-up and you were to come to his assistance and flop out our wild and woolly friend, we should clean up on both of them. Let Reeves tackle it his own way, but stand by for accidents, and remember that your Marley will produce the coin the moment he comes into his inheritance."

Cloete spat. "It is not so bad the way the big one wants it," he growled. "He wants to fight fair, but the young man is frightened to do his own dirty work, and he wants me to do it for him. Man, that makes me sick!"

"You're going to do it, too," said Grant in a bullying tone. "Don't make any mistake, Cloete; I'm going to have that money. You know what I'll do if you let me down. I can easily dig up that evidence and say it has only just come into my possession."

The Dutchman was cowed. "All right, Mr. Grant," he muttered, "I'll do it." Another objection occurred to him. "If they are in Portuguese territory, what then? I cannot go shooting there."

Grant sneered, "Don't play that game, Cloete. You have poached elephants across the border many a time. Besides, who is to know where the thing happens? The nearest post on that side is two hundred miles away."

Cloete subsided. He saw that he must do this thing or make an enemy of Loudon Grant, a state of affairs he dreaded to contemplate. They sat over the bottle until it was empty, and then Cloete staggered off to his tent, leaving Grant not ill pleased with his night's work.

The following day the safari started—on foot, for the country was unsuited to mechanical transport. On the fourth evening they reached the Nyoka and went into camp where Cloete had camped when he made Kaspa captive three years before. They visited the cave in the donga and found it deserted; then Cloete settled down to kill time, while his natives scoured the country for news of the lion-man.

The visitors amused themselves according to their tastes. Reeves and his wife went hunting and carried suffering and destruction into the game herds of the veld; Lucian lay about under the trees reading novels; while Sefton and Madeline explored the countryside.

It is the land of cold sparkling dawns, torrid days, and hushed purple nights. Madeline loved it. She went with Sefton into the forest and saw the hoary trees standing draped in flowering creepers, and heard the drumming call of the colobus and the melancholy croaking of the hornbills. She bathed in the ice-cold waters of the mountain streams and walked in the still, glowing evenings over the enormous veld that went on for ever into the fascinating unknown. At night she lay in her camp-bed hearing the hunger-cry of the hyenas and the grunting of leopards along the stream, and once the distant coughing roar of a lion which made her sit up in bed with beating heart and straining ears, wondering if her friend were roaming the veld with his savage friends about him.

THOSE were glorious days for Sefton. He delighted in the company of his beloved and the wondrous land which he showed her, and which to him had never been so filled with beauty and romance. They were good comrades, those two, and no word of love passed between them, for Martin had found a higher ideal: the realization of a pure passion uninfluenced by the hope of reward. The unhurried peace of the wilderness entered into him; he felt that all was well, that every difficulty would adjust itself, and that human joys and sorrows were of little account.

"Out of evil cometh good," was in his mind. "I may learn something if I am strong enough," he told himself, and what he hoped to learn was the lesson of resignation which nature teaches.

It is not strange that men who live in wide spaces become fatalists. Beneath the soaring, snow-capped peak of Nyoka mountain man's doings seemed ephemeral and man himself of little moment. There is a purpose behind it all, and the workings of that purpose Sefton would not dispute. He bowed to the inevitable and gave thanks.

On the seventh day Jan Cloete cast his eyes upward the mountain slopes beyond the forest and sent Simba to investigate them. "I do not think he will find anything," he declared, "but we will not leave any place unexplored before we move down into the thorns."

In two days Simba returned, smiling. He had found Kaspa's tracks with the lion spoor at a waterhole on the further edge of the forest. They broke camp and journeyed through the tangled jungle. At a spot where a rushing stream descended

from the grassy slopes into the leafy forest the tents were pitched one evening just at sunset, and before the last mallet-stroke echoed in the calm air the roaring of lions was all about them. No one went to bed until late that night. The air was cold and misty; they sat round a blazing fire and listened to the voices of the lions, now near, now far, as they hunted the zebra on the hills.

Once, towards morning, Madeline awoke with the feeling that some presence was near her. She was convinced that huge, tawny beasts were moving stealthily about the camp. She pulled the blankets over her head and lay shivering in dread of the wild creatures.

The following moring they set out to find the lions' lair, all except Lucian, who stayed in camp, alleging indisposition. Jan Cloete led the party up over the veld, the others trailing along behind. Sefton and Madeline were last, and before they had gone far he drew her aside under a shady tree and let the party proceed without them.

"I can't stand going after Kaspa like that, all armed and looking like a Cockney shooting-party," he said. "Let you and me do a little exploring on our own account."

The girl agreed, and they continued up the hill, following the course of the river, striving to penetrate the morning mist which still enshrouded them. The search for Kaspa was kept up all day, but the only person to see and have speech with the lion-man was the one who did not look for him.

After the others had departed Lucian took his book and wandered into the forest. The heavy trees arched over him, and the thick laurel-growth hedged about him, so that he felt shut off from the world and enclosed in a green peace of shining leaves and tinkling waters. There were beautiful black and white colobus in a glade by the stream, and he watched them idly.

They were the only beasts he saw, and he was unconscious that he ran any risk of encountering rhinoceros or buffalo so close to the camp. The young man was in a state of nervous excitement. Since his conversation with Loudon Grant, in which he had said more than he intended, his mind had been in a turmoil of doubts and fears. He knew that Cloete had been informed that he was willing to pay heavily for Kaspa's death, and whenever he met the hunter's gaze he saw contempt and dislike in those cold blue eyes.

While he walked in this peaceful spot, musical with the cooing of big blue pigeons, his ears were strained for the sound of a rifle-shot, a sound that would announce his accession to a fortune and the brand of murderer. He sat down by the rushing stream and groaned aloud. Why had he acquiesced in this dreadful deed? He had not meant to go so far when he talked with Grant, but the commissioner had plied him with drink and led him on, until finally he had thrown discretion to the winds and actually offered half a million dollars for the proof of his cousin's death.

He realized now that he was entirely in Grant's hands. The man had made him put his offer in writing, and for the rest of his life he would go in fear of exposure and the gallows. He wished he had never come to this country where men talked of murder so easily; better far if he had stayed in Toronto and let that money-lender do his worse.

He knew himself no match for these unscrupulous men. Grant and Cloete would exploit him and fool him, and in the finish he would derive nothing from this expedition but terror and misery. Why had he not taken Reeves' advice and appealed to Kaspa to help him? He longed for that opportunity now, but he was assured that he would never have it. It was too late. Cloete was on the trail of the lion-man, and when he found him a single shot would settle the matter. He would never see his cousin alive again. He groaned aloud, "Oh, Kaspa, why did you ever come back to this horrible place where there is death and cruelty in the very air one breathes?"

A low voice replied to him. "I am so accustomed to it that I can't do without it, Lucian."

Kaspa stood there behind him, leaning against a tree ten paces away. Lucian stared at the lion-man as though he were a ghost, and indeed his appearance was frightening enough to the unaccustomed gaze of the city man.

Kaspa's hair had grown long again and hung almost to his shoulders; a curling golden beard obscured the lower part of his face, and a flowing mustache depended to meet it. He was naked, save for a girdle of monkey skin from which hung his sheath-knife. The extraordinary bulk of the man, and his bronzed skin, under which the muscles showed plainly, reminded Lucian of pictures of old Norse rovers, but he doubted if any hero of the

sagas had the stature of this son of the African wilderness.

He was so overcome at the sight of the man he had wronged that at first it seemed to him that Kaspa must be aware of his treachery and be eager to wreak vengeance upon him. He crouched down upon the mossy ground, holding out beseeching hands to avert the punishment he expected.

Kaspa was astonished. "What's the matter?" he asked. "You know who it is. It is I, Kaspa, Lucian. I will not hurt you."

Lucian could only goggle at him speechlessly. Kaspa sat down upon the bank of the stream also, and waited for the other to regain his self-possession. The lion-man had become aware of the intrusion of Europeans into his hunting-grounds the night before, and in the early hours of the morning he had investigated and satisfied himself that Jan Cloete was once again upon his trail. He had recognized several of the Dutchman's boys sleeping round the cooking-fire, but he did not know who made up the rest of the party.

AFTER the lions had retired to the cave he hung about the camp, concealed in the forest, intent upon establishing the identity of the visitors. He had seen a man sitting by the stream, and had recognized Lucian. He was now eager for information, for where Lucian was there would likely be others in whom he was more interested.

Lucian had recovered from his first terror and surprise, and had now given way to a fit of trembling. He stared at Kaspa with large frightened eyes.

"What is the matter with you, Lucian? You don't suppose I'm going to eat you, do you?" Kaspa's voice was husky and his accent a trifle guttural; it was long since he had spoken a civilized tongue.

"Hello, Kaspa," said Lucian weakly. "I did not expect to see you."

Kaspa laughed. "And yet you did not journey all this way just to see the country, I suppose," he said jocularly. "Why did you come, and who came with you?"

"The whole crowd is here," Lucian muttered. "Sefton and the Reeves and Madeline."

Kaspa's face clouded.

"Reeves?" he muttered. "What does he want?"

Lucian looked blank. "I don't know; he just came along."

That did not satisfy Kaspa. He thought he understood the reason of the stock-broker's presence, and determined to keep an eye on him. The thought of Madeline's near presence drew his mind in another direction. "Why has she come?" he said half aloud. "Could she not leave me alone? The temptation is too great."

Lucian, realizing that this observation was not meant for him, disregarded it. He was still in mortal terror of the lion-man, but he was beginning to understand that his treachery was known only to himself, and that he was therefore not in any immediate danger.

"The idea is to get you to return with them to Canada," he volunteered, "otherwise you must let us know how you get on from time to time, Kaspa. You know, up to the present we were in ignorance whether you were alive or dead."

"Would it have mattered?" said Kaspa with the simplicity of one who attaches no fictitious importance to these things.

Lucian coughed. "Well, you see, there is the matter of your inheritance. You are a very rich man, and, supposing you were to disappear, the lawyers would make a pile out of the estate before your death would be presumed."

Kaspa smiled. "I always forget the importance of money to you people," he said. "My grandfather's wealth is of no use to me; I can't buy anything with it out here. I wanted to give it away, but Horton would not hear of it. I wish I had done so now."

Lucian regarded him strangely. How any one could be so careless about such things was beyond his comprehension. "Would you give me a hundred thousand dollars if I asked you for it?" he said.

"Certainly. I tell you, I don't want it. I'll write a line to Horton telling him to pay you the money."

Lucian was quite overcome. Tears gathered in his eyes as he thought of the magnanimity of his cousin and his own deceitful conduct.

"Listen, Kaspa," he said earnestly. "I've been behaving like a fool since you left Toronto. I went in for speculating in shares and dropped a hundred thousand, and then I got into the hands of a money-lender. You probably don't understand all these things, but I tell you I am in pretty serious trouble. That's one reason why I came out here—to try to find you, and ask you to help me."

Kaspa responded to his look of appeal immediately. "Of course I'll help, Lucian: I'll write a letter to Horton as I said I would."

Lucian got to his feet. There was a new

purposeful look in his eyes and a somewhat grim set to his mouth.

"All right, Kaspa," he said. "I'll go back to camp and get paper and a pen right now. There's one thing I want to warn you about. Don't trust John Cloete; he'll shoot you if he gets a chance. I can't explain, but I know what I'm talking about. So long, and don't forget—watch out for Cloete."

Kaspa nodded; he had intended to do that anyway.

"Why is Reeves here?" he asked.

Lucian spoke over his shoulder as he walked away, his mind full of his difficulties. "Madeline was keen on his coming. She said she wouldn't come if the Reeves didn't."

Kaspa had no knowledge of Sheila's marriage, and this explanation of the stockbroker's presence made him thoughtful. He suffered a fierce spasm of jealousy at the thought of Reeves and Madeline together. Things had changed, apparently, since he left Canada.

He sat there brooding until Lucian returned with writing-materials; by that time he had made up his mind what to do. His first care was to write an order to James Horton to pay Lucian the sum of two hundred thousand dollars. This cost him much time and effort, for he discovered that he had almost forgotten how to use a pen, an accomplishment in which he had never been very proficient.

"Here you are," he said, extending the sheet of paper. "I have written for double what you wanted; I suppose Horton will be able to pay it." He got up and leaned his massive frame against a tree-trunk. "Now I want you to carry a message to the others. Tell Sefton it is no good his looking for me; I will not meet him. Tell him it is no use and only awakens old memories. He will understand. Tell Reeves to take himself out of this district as quickly as possible. If I find him on my hunting-grounds I will kill him. He'll understand also. Just say to Madeline Moore, 'Once a lion always a lion.' I hope she'll understand, but if she doesn't, I can't help it. Now good-by." He turned on his heel and in a moment the forest had swallowed him up.

"But, Kaspa!" cried Lucian helplessly. He hesitated, realizing that he was wasting his protests upon the empty air. After a moment's thought, he turned back to camp, his mind occupied with the messages he had to deliver. He decided that every one must hear Kaspa's words, and perhaps they might be induced by them to give up this fruitless quest and return home.

THE hunting-party returned to camp in the afternoon. They had found no trace of the lions. This was not disappointing to Cloete; he did not desire an audience when he encountered Kaspa. Reeves had shot a baboon, the biggest Cloete had ever seen, but the creature had escaped, wounded, in the mist, and they had not been able to discover its hiding-place.

Lucian did not deliver his messages from Kaspa. He wished to do so in the presence of Sefton and Madeline. He vouchsafed nothing for the moment, for he did not wish Cloete to know that he had seen Kaspa. Meanwhile Sefton and Madeline had been no more successful in their search than the others. They had followed the stream the whole morning, until, after many twistings and turnings, it led them finally into a maze of rocks and gullies in which the mist hung like a curtain, shutting out all view of the landscape.

Sefton realized that the clouds had settled down on the mountain and that there would be small hope of discovering the lair of the lion pack until they lifted. It had been his purpose to show himself prominently upon the veld, for he remembered Kaspa telling him that he was often abroad by day when the lions were sleeping, and Sefton was sure that his old friend would come to him if he knew of his presence, but the mist made this expedient impracticable.

A few miles below, at the forest level, the sun was now shining, and had Sefton been aware of this he would have descended into the clearer atmosphere, where, at that moment, Kaspa was taking farewell of Lucian Marley, and about to make his way back to the lair in the rocks. But Sefton was not to know that the whole mountain was not enveloped in cloud, and therefore he pushed on along the river, hoping to stumble upon some clew to the lion-man's whereabouts. They heard a distant shot away to their left, and after a consultation decided to investigate in this direction and, if possible to join up with the others.

"They may have found something," said Sefton, "although I doubt it. We shall have to wait for a better day for our search."

"But Kaspa must know we are here," Madeline protested. "I am certain he was near the camp last night." She was impatient and eager to find Kaspa after this long time of waiting, and Sefton's more

restrained enthusiasm now irritated her.

"Supposing we call out at intervals—won't he hear our voices and come to us?"

Sefton doubted it. Sound did not carry far in that blanket of white vapor.

Nevertheless, he agreed to try. They wandered along the edge of the rocks, calling like lost souls in the fog.

"It is a good thing we are on the side of a mountain," said the man after they had proceeded some distance. "We have only to go downhill, and to the right, to regain the stream and thus find our way back to camp."

"How do the animals find their way?" asked the girl.

"I suppose Kaspa would walk about here as we should walk about in a town, finding our way without difficulty no matter what the conditions."

Sefton laughed. "I remember Kaspa being quite bewildered in Toronto. It's all a matter of custom." He stopped and gave an exclamation of surprise.

Madeline saw that he was looking at the body of some animal among the rocks at his feet. It was a huge baboon, lying huddled, its hands pressed against a gaping wound in its chest.

"That explains the shot we heard," Sefton commented. He regarded the wounded beast commiseratingly. "Poor wretched brute, it is done for. It seems pretty useless shooting these things. I seem to see Reeves' handiwork here. It is a huge monster, the biggest I have ever seen, and of course Reeves would not resist a trophy of that kind." He looked about him expecting to see some sign of the hunters who had fired the shot. They were at one end of a steep walled gully which ran back into the hillside for about a hundred yards, where it terminated in a series of rocky steps littered with boulders.

"I must put this poor brute out of its misery," he said, raising his rifle, while the girl turned away her head to avoid witnessing the murder.

The moment Sefton leveled his rifle the baboon raised its voice in a dreadful cry of terror and despair. It seemed to know what that action portended. The crash of the shot was echoed by a chorus of barks and screams from the further side of the donga. Sefton had been prepared for some response to the sound of his shot, but he had thought it would be human, not animal. It was barely half an hour since they had heard the report of Reeves' rifle, and he did not think the stockbroker would have abandoned the search for his quarry so readily. When he perceived scores of huge shaggy forms bounding toward him out of the mist he received an unpleasant shock. He had heard of baboons attacking men, and knew them to be nasty customers to deal with, and these were giants of their species such as no one of his acquaintance had ever encountered.

He seized Madeline by the arm. "Run along the donga!" he shouted. "Those beasts are going to attack us, and we must find some shelter if possible!" He fired a couple of shots, without effect, at the onrushing horde, and dashed over the rocks up into the gully, dragging the girl with him.

Sefton's battleground was ill chosen. The rugged crags and tumbled boulders would have served well enough to frustrate the attacks of lions or buffalo, but the baboons were undeterred by these obstacles, which were more of an advantage than a handicap to them. In a few minutes the sides of the gorge were dotted with furious apes, chattering and screaming, raining down stones and boulders upon their enemies below.

Sefton retreated to one of the rock steps, pushed Madeline into the shelter of an overhang in the cliff, and began to shoot coolly and calculatingly with a view to inspiring terror in the breasts of the attackers; but before he had been able to do more than wound one beast and frighten another a chance-flung stone struck him on the side of the head and he collapsed unconscious at the feet of the horrified girl. She dragged him into the shelter beside her, picked up the fallen rifle and, summoning all her courage to her assistance, faced the mob of shaggy demons.

THE baboons swarmed down the rocks on all sides. They gathered about the ledge, leaping and scolding, trying to make up their minds to charge home and tear this strange-looking creature to pieces; but although Madeline was not sufficiently familiar with firearms to inflict any damage upon them, she knew enough to reload and fire the rifle, and the baboons feared the shattering reports of the weapon in the confined space.

Busy with her shooting, Madeline had no time to attend to Sefton, but she called his name repeatedly in a despairing voice, which elicited no response. The huge, gibbering, obscene creatures, leaping and screaming within a few yards of her, turned her sick with horror. It was difficult to look upon those clutching hands and

bared, dripping fangs and not imagine what would happen if she fell into their power.

She wondered if the rifle-shots would reach the ears of her friends, and screamed aloud to them to hurry to the rescue, but by that time Cloete and Reeves were halfway back to camp, and the deadening mist allowed no sound of the battle to reach their inattentive ears.

Madeline fired her last shots, and, in desperation clubbing the empty rifle, menaced the brutes with it. They gathered just out of reach, mowing and snarling. She knew that in another moment they would rush and overpower her. How she longed for the strength to leap upon them and club them with her weapon, to affright them with the violence and savagery of her onslaught! Oh, why did not Kaspa come to save her comrade and herself from a dreadful death? She was convinced of his near presence, and in her extremity she cried his name aloud into that wall of deadening mist.

"Kaspa! Kaspa!" she screamed desperately, and her cry was answered. Down the rocks he sprang, roaring his challenge, as swift and agile as the baboons themselves. Madeline had a bewildering glimpse of a huge, almost naked figure flourishing a gleaming knife, and then he was lost to sight in a medley of struggling, heaving forms.

Kaspa had charged the baboon pack and gone to ground under the weight of their furry bodies, thrusting and grappling like the lion he was. He emerged from that flurry torn and bleeding, but still strong and uncrippled, leaping and darting among the demoralized baboons, and everywhere he struck, an ape fell howling in its death-throes. They had not forgotten the lesson he had taught them out on the veld, and even now, when the advantage was all on their side, they hesitated to close with that roaring, whirling figure.

Madeline watched, spellbound, a fight such as few people could imagine. Her tender flesh winced and shrank at the hurts her friend received, but amidst her fear and horror she was conscious of a fierce exultation at his prowess and the strength and courage that made him one with the kings of the wilderness.

As he fought, Kaspa roared the rallying cry, and a few hundred yards away in their sheltered cave Ruka and Dogo raised listening heads, and recognized the voice of their leader. Madeline, appalled, saw huge tawny forms leaping down the rocks, and heard the awful, cavernous roaring of the infuriated lions. In a moment the baboons were fleeing in all directions, shrieking their dismay and amongst them, like avenging demons, darted the lions, slashing and biting with savage energy. The pack had not forgotten their feud with the apes and the causes of it, and their wrath found full vent.

Kaspa left the pursuit to his followers, and turned back to speak with Madeline. He stood leaning upon a rock looking at her, and; below the mask of blood that covered it, his face was inscrutable. She returned his gaze in silence; as yet her mind was too unruly for speech. She observed that although Kaspa's great chest was heaving and his body gashed and bleeding from a dozen wounds, he seemed quite calm and master of himself. She did not know what an effort that calmness cost him, for he was longing to spring forward and grasp her in his arms.

Instead of obeying that natural impulse, he said in a hard, even voice, "What are you doing here? This is no place for you. Sefton should not have allowed you to wander about here by yourself."

For answer she stepped aside and indicated the supine form of her friend and protector.

"Is he dead?" said Kaspa fiercely.

She shook her head. "Stunned, I think. Poor Martin."

Her voice was caressing, and Kaspa said quickly, "Are you going to marry him?"

Madeline smiled sadly, "No, Kaspa; there is only one man I shall marry." Her eyes dropped before his and she blushed faintly.

Kaspa drew a long breath that sounded like a sigh. "As long as it is a man, and not a beast," he said harshly. The next moment he had sprung and caught a projecting spur of rock, drawing himself up with ease over the rim of the gully.

The girl heard grunting, and the shadowy forms of lions crossed her vision in the gray mist.

"Kaspa, wait!" she cried in a despairing voice, but only those low grunts, diminishing in the distance, answered her.

Sefton stirred and muttered. He sat up, holding his head.

"What happened to me?" he said dully. "I thought I heard Kaspa's voice."

"Oh, Martin, he has gone!" cried Madeline with tears in her voice. "He saved us, and now he has vanished again!" She told him all that had happened, while he sat holding his aching head and staring at the limp shapes of the dead baboons.

After a time they began to make their way back to camp, slowly and painfully, for Sefton was weak and ill. He had managed to cheer his companion and himself with the knowledge that they had at least found Kaspa's retreat and must obtain further speech with him if they were persistent enough.

Madeline would not be comforted. The sight of that gigantic godlike figure had awakened all her old longings, and she could only remember his gloomy looks and the strange words he had spoken. It seemed to her that he was wilder and more aloof than ever, and further beyond her reach.

CHAPTER XI

THE TREKKING CRY

TOWARDS morning Reeves awoke and lay listening. Above the croaking of the frogs in the stream-bed rose the faint echoing murmur of lions' voices raised in the hunting-call. Somewhere out on the misty veld Kaspa and his friends were busy about their nightly affairs.

The stockbroker felt a thrill of uneasiness as he pictured those shadowy, powerful forms slinking through the mist. Kaspa's warning recurred to his mind. He was in considerable danger sleeping in the midst of his enemies so trustingly—he would be watchful and prepared.

He did not realize how futile his precautions would have been had Kaspa been determined upon his death. At almost any hour of the twenty-four Reeves was in the power of the lions. They had only to steal upon him from bush or donga, and overwhelm him by a sudden rush, against which his rifle would have been useless. Reeves did not know the helpless figure he made in the wilderness, where every beast found man a blundering, obtuse creature whose presence was perceptible to everything living as soon as he entered the district.

A man-eater can hold a whole district terror-stricken, and had Kaspa adopted the tactics of the man-eater, Reeves would have been easy prey. The stockbroker, ignorant of these matters, was still aware that he must guard himself after the warning he had received. He told himself that he was a bad man to threaten. He wanted to meet Kaspa face to face and settle the matter once and for all—that was what he had come to Africa for.

He heard a number of cavernous voices raised in triumphant chorus, and reasoned that the lions had found their meat.

Up there in the wan, misty moonlight they were gathered about the carcass of a buck or zebra, and it would be simple to creep up to them and surprise them at the feast. He slipped quietly into shorts and boots, and, taking his rifle from beside his bed, stole out into the night, leaving Sheila sleeping peacefuly in her camp bed.

Cloete would have laughed had he known Reeves' purpose. It was all very well to creep up to feeding lions and get a shot at them, but when the lions were directed by a human intelligence, the chances of surprising them were almost nil. As Cloete would have explained, the lion is not afraid of man at night, and the reason one may approach him under cover of darkness is that he is disinclined to bestir himself to seek cover.

In this case Reeves was dealing with some one who, knowing the capabilities of high-powered rifles, would not easily be taken at a disadvantage. Without worrying about the direction of the wind or the lie of the country, Reeves strode out upon the veld, intent upon finding his enemy and bringing matters to a conclusion. The best defense was attack, he maintained, and he was not going to lie down under the insults of a creature no better than an animal.

Reeves was no coward, but he did not realize the danger he ran. Had he done so he would have thought twice about tackling a lion pack single-handed in the dark. Every story he had heard confirmed his opinion that the man with the rifle was in an unassailable position, providing he kept his head and shot straight. He had made many a sortie into no-man's land in the old days, and since he had not bombs, machine-guns, and shrapnel to contend with on this occasion he felt confident of his ability to escape scathless from the encounter he hoped to provoke.

The idea that he was soon to be surrounded by half a dozen noiseless, furtive beasts who could kill him at a blow without his being aware of their presence did not occur to him. The affair was between Kaspa and himself, and he visualized a stand-up fight in which his rifle would be pitted against the speed and strength of his antagonist.

The low grunts that reverberated upon the still air at intervals gave him his direction, and at the end of a mile of sharp

walking he came to a grassy hollow wherein huge beasts fed under a pall of mist. He could hear the scrunching and lapping of their great jaws within a few yards, and by sheer luck the wind that carried these sounds was blowing strongly in his face.

He stood there gripping his rifle, peering into the mist wreaths which blew over the hills towards him, uncertain what course to pursue. He supposed that Kaspa was with the lions, but he was by no means certain of it. It seemed he must go forward to the kill, holding his rifle ready to shoot the first beast he saw. Cloete had told him of adventures similar to this. It seemed that the lions would attack you unless they were wounded, and that if you dropped one the others would clear off and leave their comrade to its fate.

He intended to make himself master of the kill, and if there was any dispute about the matter, so much the worse for the lions. He stepped forward slowly, striving to penetrate the gloom that rendered everything invisible at a distance of six paces from his eyes.

Immediately he entered the hollow there was a sharp "woof" of alarm succeeded by dead silence. The lions were aware of him, and he pictured them crouched over the kill, watching to see what creature would appear out of the mist. He became slightly uneasy as he thought that Kaspa might well incite the whole pack to go for him.

He had been so obsessed with the wish to meet the lion-man that he considered the lions as no more than spectators of the combat. Now he felt the presence of huge ferocious beasts within a few yards of him, and a frightening sense of his own littleness descended upon him, as cold and clammy as the mist.

A little human figure, alone in the night among the things that called the night their friend! He had been a fool to tackle this job single-handed, but there was no turning back now; his self-respect was at stake. All the same, he wished the brutes would clear off and leave him free to return to the comfort of the camp fire, and the society of his fellow adventurers.

STEP by step he advanced, the rifle trembling slightly in his grasp. A voice came suddenly out of the obscurity, a low, husky voice that made Reeves jump, until he recognized it. "If that is a man, let him turn back before we kill him."

Reeves felt an intense relief. He was not nearly as much afraid of Kaspa as he was of the silent lions.

"I'm looking for you," he said belligerently. "I got your message, and I've come to argue the matter out with you. Come forward and show yourself."

A low laugh reached him.

"You have a rifle, I suppose, and you wish me to offer myself as a target. Is there any one with you, Reeves?"

"No, I'm alone," the stockbroker answered. "I want to settle this thing man to man."

"Man to lion," Kaspa corrected. "You will fight with man's weapons according to man's custom, and I will fight like a lion. All right, Reeves, look out! You will never reach your camp again."

Reeves laughed sardonically. "You don't frighten me!" he cried. "Tell your lion friends to stand back, and come forward yourself. I want to see you charge me as you did once before. I'd have stopped you that time if I'd had something more than a pop-gun."

There was no answer; the wind soughed mournfully through the grass, and near by a little veld bird spoke hopefully of the coming dawn. Reeves listened intently. The silence got on his nerves. He supposed Kaspa was crouching there waiting for him to make the first move.

All right, he would not disappoint him. He walked forward rapidly, holding his rifle at the ready. He stopped suddenly before the half-eaten carcass of a zebra. There was no sign of the lions. The body was still warm, and he could see the huge footprints of the carnivora in the soil about the kill. The sight of that spoor dismayed him; it was indicative of the size and strength of the creatures that made it. They must be bigger than any lions he had seen in a menagerie. He glared round him, ready to defend himself. There was nothing visible but the moonlit mist swirling along the grass.

Reeves shuddered suddenly. He was a fool to stand there exposing himself to his enemies. Why didn't Kaspa come out and fight? He had not thought the fellow a coward. He shouted an insulting challenge into the mist, and afar off, as it seemed, a huge voice moaned, "Aar-gh, aar-gh."

Reeves ran up out of the hollow. Suddenly he knew that they were all about him, great slouching things with red eyes of hate, hearing and seeing him without difficulty, while he groped in that silver obscurity as helpless as a blind man. He headed downhill, walking with long hasty

strides, seeking the camp and the security of lamps and fires. Deep, mournful voices moaned and grunted out of the mist ahead. He stopped and, turning at right angles, started off anew in a long detour. He had not gone far before again he heard those sounds in front.

He stood to wipe the sweat from his brow with the sleeve of his shirt. He was being hunted like a buck; he knew it instinctively. Kaspa had said that he would never reach the camp alive. It occurred to him that any one of those silent-footed demons might come charging out of the mist to strike him to the ground before he had time to level his rifle. He realized the terrible capabilities of lions in the night upon their own hunting-ground. How deluded he had been in thinking man invincible with the weapons of civilization! Kaspa had said he would fight with the weapons of lions, and Reeves was more helpless against these tactics than the smallest buck that ran panic-stricken from those blood-curdling voices. He sat down upon a grass-covered ant-hill and determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. He would get one of the brutes, anyway, before he was overwhelmed.

There was an ear-shattering roar and some great beast came rushing toward him through the mist. He leapt to his feet and threw up his rifle, ready to shoot immediately the attacker became visible, but nothing materialized; the lion did not push home his charge. In the ensuing silence Reeves found that he was holding his breath. He expelled it in a great shout. "Kaspa, call off your lions! This is between us two alone." There was no answer, and the little veld bird began again to cheer on the reluctant dawn with his sweet, melancholy notes.

"I won't be stampeded like a zebra," said Reeves to himself, "I'll walk straight on, and if they want to attack me, they can do so. I know they've got me beat. I may as well die game." He pushed on towards the camp, and this time, when those warning grunts sounded ahead of him, he did not turn back, but strode forward ready to shoot his way out of the ambush. He saw nothing, but once as he dipped down into a shallow donga something dashed out of the mist and actually brushed against his legs. He spun round, but there was nothing to shoot at. That incident reassured him somewhat.

The lion could have killed him without risk to itself, and the fact that it had not done so proved that Kaspa had been bluffing. He would not be harmed on this occasion; he was being warned, and he made up his mind to accept the warning. It was now plain to him that if he stayed in this locality his life was forfeit. Kaspa could kill him in a dozen ways—by night, as he slept, by day as he walked in the bush. His enemy might lie up in any piece of bush or grass and strike him down as he passed by. The odds were all in the lion-man's favor.

Reeves struck into the little game-path beside the stream and hurried onwards, thanking his luck that he had not gone astray in the dark. The dawn was now breaking, the mist becoming lighter and less opaque; he could see bushes and rocks on either hand. His nearness to camp did not cause him to relax his vigilance, however. He kept wary eyes upon the surrounding shrubs, and so intent was he on guarding against a sudden attack that he did not notice a slim figure approaching along the trail. This was Madeline, who had awakened and, influenced by the hope that she might encounter Kaspa, or at least hear something of his hunting, had strolled out along the stream.

She saw Reeves coming towards her, rifle in hand, and something made her suspect his purpose in being abroad at that early hour. She knew that the stockbroker had never forgiven Kaspa for manhandling him, and had always cherished the hope of meeting the lion-man again and reversing the decision. Reeves had his fair share of the spirit that does not recognize defeat, and the girl felt a certain sympathy with him, but she had no wish for these two enemies to encounter each other again.

She awaited Reeves, to remonstrate with him for his solitary hunting, which she was convinced was inspired by his wish to catch Kaspa at his nocturnal pursuits. As she revolved these thoughts in her mind, she noticed that Reeves was acting in a perculiar way. He peered at each bush and rock before he approached it, and then hurried past as though fearful that it hid an enemy that would pounce out upon him. He kept wheeling suddenly and looking behind him, holding his rifle at the ready.

IN ANOTHER moment she realized the reason for these maneuvers. Reeves passed a patch of tangled bush after subjecting it to a keen scrutiny, and immediately a big shadowy figure leaped out from amid the leaves and ran with the speed of

a wild leopard upon the unconscious man.

Madeline screamed, and Reeves spun around, but he was too late. Kaspa reached him, and, grasping the rifle with one hand, struck him down with the other. Luckily for Reeves he managed to break the force of the blow with his upraised forearm, but nevertheless he was felled as completely as a pole-axed bullock.

Kaspa cast the rifle aside and seized upon his fallen foe. The river at this point ran deep, in a gorge thirty feet below the trail. The lion-man intended to cast the unconscious form of Reeves into this chasm. There was no thought of mercy in his mind. Reeves had set out to shoot him and had failed; he must now pay the penalty of his rashness, according to the law of the wilderness. Kaspa had spared him once, and thereby laid himself open to renewed attacks. He congratulated himself that there was no one to interfere on this occasion—and then he saw Madeline racing towards him along the narrow track.

Kaspa paused in his act of casting his victim into the boiling flood below. He looked at the girl in mute interrogation.

"Kaspa, for heaven's sake don't kill him!" gasped Madeline. "You mustn't—you hear? You mustn't!" She stamped her foot in the vehemence of her effort to avert the tragedy that would, she knew, bring such dreadful consequences upon her lover. Kaspa's expression terrified her. His eyes had that same red glare in them that they had held when he had fought the baboons—an inhuman light, cruel and remorseless. Great tears gathered in the girl's eyes; she beat her hands together in the agony of her distress.

She knew instinctively that Reeves had again done something to arouse Kaspa's wrath, and she was in momentary fear that the lion-man would disregard her entreaties and with a single motion cast the helpless man to his death, as easily as he had cast him out into Lake Scugog upon that other occasion. Once that die was cast, all her prayers and his remorse could not remedy matters; Kaspa would be a murderer, and, since he would never allow himself to be captured, he would be shot down by the men sent to arrest him. She saw the whole ghastly business in a flash of intense horror.

The deed must be prevented at all costs. Once get Reeves out of the lion-man's clutches to a place of safety, and explanations could follow. It was significant that at that moment she had no pity to spare for Reeves; all her energies were devoted to preventing her lover from committing an unforgivable crime. But Kaspa thought otherwise.

"What is he to you?" he growled, still holding the slowly recovering Reeves in a grasp of iron.

Madeline looked into those fiery yellow eyes, and made up her mind upon the instant. "I love him," she said clearly.

Kaspa's gaze flickered. He winced as though from a blow. Then suddenly he dropped the stunned man upon the grass, turned, and was gone, leaving Madeline standing there uncertain whether to exult or despair at the success of her ruse. After a moment she smiled. Kaspa had been saved from committing murder, which was the important thing; she could explain the matter at their next meeting, which she determined should not be long delayed. There had been no doubt of the wild man's feelings when he heard that she loved another, and Madeline felt inclined to laugh with a new happiness at the thought of what portended. Kaspa had given himself away badly.

Reeves sat up, feeling his arm, which he thought broken. "This is the second time," he said slowly. "The third time will be my finish. Madeline, I'm going to make my get-away out of this country. I know when I've had enough."

She smiled at him. "Why not make it up with Kaspa? He will be your friend if you will let him, I feel sure." She blushed and added diffidently, "You might also assure him that what I said had no foundation of truth."

Reeves looked puzzled. "What did you say? I was a bit muzzy, and I can't remember."

"Never mind," said Madeline, turning away. "It was of no consequence. Are you able to walk along to camp? It is only just round the corner."

Reeves said he was, and proved the truth of his assertion by struggling to his feet and starting off. Madeline cast a long searching glance into the thinning mist where Kaspa had disappeared, before she followed, but the lion-man was far away over the veld by that time.

In camp, over a cup of tea before the fire, Reeves made a resolution; it was that he would return to Nyoka without delay, and never again go looking for trouble with lions.

"Once is enough for me," he said decidedly. "I spent the worst hour of my career walking over that veld with those

demons all about me. I never want to hear a lion roar again."

Sefton, who had listened to the stockbroker's story without comment, drew Madeline aside out of earshot, and showed her a scrap of bark upon which some words had been traced, apparently with a burnt stick. The girl read:

> Martin, follow the stream along to the big rock in the forest at moonrise. I will be there.

"This was lying on my pillow this morning when I woke up," Sefton told her. "I think Kaspa must have stolen into camp last night and left this message for me."

Madeline's eyes began to shine. "I will come with you to that trysting-place, Martin," she said softly.

Sefton nodded. "It was my intention to ask you," he said quietly.

JAN CLOETE came toward them, and Madeline thanked her friend with a look as she turned to greet the Dutchman. "Now I suppose today we go looking for these lions," said the hunter. "They have made a kill up on the plain, and I will track them from it to their lair."

Sefton told him that as far as he was concerned there would be no hunting that day, and Madeline seconded his resolution.

"Ah, then I must go alone," said Cloete, "for Mr. Reeves is not able."

"I will come with you," offered Lucian, who seemed to Cloete to be following him wherever he went. The Dutchman gave him a mocking glance, but he made no remark. Lucian was in an awkward position. He had never discussed with the hunter the arrangement for Kaspa's taking-off, but he had reason to believe that Grant had done so. In the circumstances, he felt unable to make any reference to a compact which was of so delicate a nature that the true meaning of it had never been put into words.

He had signed a paper—now in Grant's possession—offering a large sum of money for proof of Kaspa's death; but Kaspa was very much alive, and they all knew it. Any allusion to this curious bargain would depict him in the unpleasant light of accessory to his cousin's murder, and Lucian shrank from admitting yet another person into his guilty secret.

As things stood at present he could explain that he had been convinced of Kaspa's death and was endeavoring to establish the truth of it. He clung to this evasion with all the desperation of his weak character; but though he was prepared to incur Grant's wrath by repudiating all agreements with him, he was in deadly fear that Cloete would carry out his part of the bargain, and by shooting Kaspa establish Lucian as the instigator of the deed.

He felt that the only way to prevent this was by never letting the Dutchman out of his sight. As long as he was at hand he had only to shout a warning, and he knew that Kaspa would make his escape. He had warned his cousin already, but that would not render him proof against surprise by a skillful and experienced hunter like Cloete. Lucian consoled himself with the thought that, no matter how skillful the hunter, the game might be alarmed by the deliberate efforts of his companion. Accordingly he followed Cloete about the camp, and prepared himself to take the field, as the hunter's assistant, at any moment of the day or night.

Cloete was not perturbed by his surveillance. Grant had anticipated weakening on the part of the young conspirator, and had instructed the hunter to go ahead with his plan, no matter what Lucian did or said. "When the job is done, he'll soon find out which side his bread is buttered," the commissioner had said, "and, anyway, I have his written agreement. He'll find it pretty difficult to wriggle out of that."

Cloete was in no hurry to carry out his part of the bargain. The presence of the visitors was embarrassing to him, and he would have preferred to undertake the job alone. Supposing these people left the district before he had found Kaspa, he would not worry; he could always return at his convenience and felt certain that the wild man would not escape him.

When Lucian announced his intention of going hunting that morning it did not defeat Cloete; it merely delayed him. He accepted the inevitable with the patience of one who has lived most of his life in contact with natural forces which refuse to be hurried. Cloete was also a fatalist.

They started out after breakfast and trekked all day over the veld and among the rocks; but when Lucian returned at dusk, footsore and dispirited, he had the satisfaction of knowing that Cloete seemed as puzzled about Kaspa's place of concealment as was every one else.

The remainder of the party had spent a quiet day. Reeves and his wife had wandered about the edge of the forest. The stockbroker's arm was in a sling, and he felt no desire to move far afield. Madeline

and Sefton had also been among the trees and along the river, where, a mile from the camp, a huge rock towered up out of the sea of vegetation. It was approached by a number of game-trails, for at its foot was a deposit of soda-impregnated soil that attracted the wild things for miles round.

As Sefton surveyed this grim and lonely spot, he felt a lively anticipation of what was to happen there that night. "We shall be able to have an understanding with Kaspa at last," he said. "The dear old fellow must listen to reason this time, for we have agreed to conceal nothing, and to evade no explanation that can make him aware of the true state of affairs."

Madeline sighed happily as she thought of the meeting to come. Kaspa should make no mistake about her feelings towards him. She loved him with all her heart and soul, and asked nothing better than to share his lot whatever it might be. Sefton would help her to plead with him, and between the two of them their love for this splendid wild creature would surely bring him back to them.

She was confident that the night would at last bring happiness, as she strolled with her friend and Kaspa's beneath the great silent trees. The forest did not frighten her now; she had grown used to it, and its wild mysterious beauty had begun to attract her romantic nature. Kaspa would find her more than willing to live in this glorious country with him, and together they would build a home and settle down in the wilderness they both loved.

AT TEN O'CLOCK the moon rose, and before its red rim had climbed clear of the horizon Madeline and Sefton made their way, unobserved, as they supposed, out of camp and took the forest path along the river. The Reeves were occupied with their own concerns and did not see their friends depart, or, if they did, considered it no concern of theirs, but Jan Cloete was more interested.

He waited until they were well out of the camp, and then picked up his rifle and followed with all the caution that the experience of a lifetime in the bush had taught him. Lucian arose from his seat by the fire, where he had been moodily reviewing the events of the day, and stealthily followed the hunter.

Cloete had overheard a portion of Sefton's conversation with Madeline that morning—sufficient to tell him that there was an assignation arranged for tonight. He reasoned that this could only be with Kaspa, and it had occurred to him during his fruitless search over the veld that an opportunity of carrying out Grant's instructions might present itself that night. Cloete believed in seizing every chance that offered.

After Kaspa had concluded his interview with the young people in the forest he could trail him until out of sound of the camp, and then accomplish the deed that would make him a rich man for life. He went quickly along the river trail, tracing the imprints of Sefton's nailed boots in the soft earth. It was very dark under the big trees, for the moonlight had not yet penetrated there. Cloete almost bumped into the people he was following before he noticed them standing before the big rock.

He retired noiselessly into thicker cover, and Lucian crouched behind him unable to see what the hunter was watching, but content with a position which allowed him to view all Cloete's movements. Had the hunter not been so intent upon the scene by the rock, Lucian could hardly have hoped to remain unobserved, for he was no woodsman, and Cloete was a difficult person to spy upon.

Madeline had decided upon her course of action. She wished Martin to meet Kaspa first and to explain to him the cause of their journey to Africa, and the reason of her declaration of the morning, the purpose of which had been to save Reeves' life. When this had been accomplished and the lion-man pacified, she would make her appearance. She concealed herself in a thicket close by, and left Sefton alone in the glade.

With the first glimmer of the moonlight, low down through the trees, Kaspa stepped out of the bush so silently that Sefton was unaware of his presence until he heard his low greeting in his ear and turned to grasp his friend's hand. Kaspa looked keenly at him, then he raised his head and sniffed. The action disconcerted Sefton. He gave a forced laugh and spoke quite differently from what he had intended. The sight of that gigantic figure, so familiar to him, excited him and filled his breast with emotions which he attempted to conceal behind a flippant manner.

"Hello, Kaspa, old man; I am glad to see you." It sounded foolish in his own ears, and the thought of what Madeline must be thinking of him made him curse himself for a self-conscious fool. Kaspa regarded him curiously out of watchful yellow eyes.

He sniffed again. "Where is the girl?" he said suddenly.

Sefton goggled.

"She is in camp, Kaspa." His one thought was to keep his promise to Madeline and to prevent Kaspa from departing into the forest without hearing her story, a development they both feared. Kaspa looked steadily at his friend.

"I have a lot to tell you, old man," began Martin hurriedly. "Madeline wants to talk to you."

Kaspa made an impatient gesture. "I don't want to discuss that now. I left her for you. It seemed we were mistaken. Her affections are centered elsewhere."

He checked Martin's attempt at speech. "Let that go; I have other things to talk about—but first we will go a little further into the forest away from eavesdroppers."

Once more upon the banks of the stream, he stopped and faced the Englishman. "Martin, I am tired of this"—he swept his hand out over the forest. "I want to be two things at once—a wild man and a tame man. When you people took me away into the towns you did me the worst service possible. You made it impossible for me to return to this life, and my upbringing made it impossible for me to live your life. I am a most wretched person; I am discontented."

"I have wondered if there was any way of combining a wild life with the benefits of civilization. I could build a house somewhere out in the bush and live there like I did in Port Perry, but I must have some one to share it with me, and who would wish to share such an existence?"

"I would," said Sefton quickly.

Kaspa shook his head. "You are not intended for that. You have often told me you hated your life at Nyoka; how could you be happy in the midst of this desolation?" He sighed. "I had hopes and dreams, but they are all vanities."

Sefton knew he was thinking of Madeline. He caught him eagerly by the arm. "Listen, Kaspa—you are making a terrible mistake. Madeline wants to speak with you—she will explain everything. Will you let me call her?"

Kaspa smiled. "I knew she was close by. I smelled the perfume she uses."

He raised his head and listened intently. A faint grunting came from the bush. Kaspa wheeled upon Sefton, his eyes full of flickering lights.

"Who is with you? Who is the man who crouched in the bush with a rifle in his hands? Is it Reeves?"

"Good heavens, no! There is no one, Kaspa—no one but Madeline."

Kaspa's lip lifted in a faint snarl. "She has brought her sweetheart with her, Martin," he said. "They intend to shoot me from ambush." He stood quite still, sniffing and listening, and Sefton was still also, appalled by the sense of tragedy he felt hovering over them. Again that low grunting sounded on the quiet air, and this time there was a savage snarling note in it. Kaspa threw back his head and roared. At once the forest became a pandemonium. Heavy bodies crashed through the bushes, the terrible roaring of lions reverberated among the trees, and mixed with the awful sound was the shrill scream of a woman.

Kaspa dashed out into the moonlit glade by the rock, Sefton at his heels. Madeline was standing there, her hands clasped in an attitude of fear and supplication, and before her crouched two huge lions. Kaspa grunted. Dogo and Zito turned at his call and pushed against him, one on either side. Kaspa faced Madeline in the moonlit clearing, and for a moment they looked into each other's eyes—and in that moment Cloete rose from behind his covering bush and took steady aim with his long rifle. His opportunity had come. One of his party was threatened by two ferocious beasts. It was easy for him to say he had picked the wrong figure in that dim light.

Kaspa's life trembled upon the Dutchman's trigger-finger, for the old hunter did not miss at that range, but the lion-man was more wary than Cloete supposed. For the past ten minutes Ruka had been hiding within a few yards of the Dutchman. The big lion, pitching his voice afar off, had told Kaspa of the enemy waiting in the bush with ready rifle, and his leader had replied with the roar that meant "Kill!"

AS CLOETE leveled his weapon, Ruka rose out of the shadows and dashed upon him. The hunter went down like a buck beneath that savage attack, and Lucian, rushing forward in a futile attempt to prevent the murder of Kaspa, about to be enacted before his eyes, found himself forestalled by a force more effective than his own. He turned and fled shouting from the awful sound of rending claws and crunching fangs.

But Ruka's sudden attack, though it preserved his leader's life, did not prevent his injury. The old Dutch hunter had so concentrated upon his purpose that even the dreadful roar of the charging lion did no

more than upset his aim. Before he turned to defend himself, he loosed the bullet that a moment later would have crashed through Kaspa's chest, but which thus hurriedly fired was less accurate than it might have been. It struck the lion-man in the muscles of his thigh, tearing a large hole, and with its shock causing him to stagger against a tree, to which he clung. He leaned there, his gaze burning into Madeline's brain in a look she was never to forget.

He spoke one word: "Traitress!" And his voice held the growl of the lion. Then, laughing wildly, he spun round upon Sefton.

"Good-by to all my dreams—and good-by to you, friend. Tell Grant to come himself to avenge Reeves' death, he must get me before he gets Ruka." He began to limp away across the clearing, leaving a red splash at every step, whilst Sefton, overwhelmed with grief and horror, watched him helplessly.

But Madeline was more determined than the young Englishman; she realized that all that made for happiness in her life was departing out of it with the man she loved. Like a deer she sped across the clearing and threw her arms about the great shoulders of the lion-man. "Kaspa, for heaven's sake listen! It is not as you think. I have never betrayed you. Please let me explain."

At the red glare in the gaze he turned upon her, she became frantic. "Beast, beast!—to accuse me of such a thing!" she cried, beating at his huge chest with her tiny fists. "I will not let you go until you believe me! I love you! How could I hurt you? You shall not scorn me!"

Kaspa shook her off, but in desperation she gripped his arm and so trailed behind him, striving with all her slender strength to restrain his inexorable progress. He stopped and looked at her; there was a softer expression in his eyes this time. "You love me?" he said, and laughed, but it was not a cynical laugh. Madeline pushed against him, panting with her effort. She realized that her chance had come. Now she could convince him of her innocence of the attempt upon his life—could hold him with her beauty and the weakness which was her greatest strength—now, or never!

She spoke quickly in her low exquisite voice, vibrant with emotion. "I care nothing for Reeves. I said I loved him to prevent you from killing him and suffering the penalty. For it is you I love, Kaspa—won't you believe that? How can you think me wicked enough to act as decoy for those cowards who tried to kill you?" She stamped her foot, her dark eyes flashed, her whole frame was racked with the emotions of rage and regret.

Kaspa placed more reliance upon intuitive understanding than the value of words; he sensed the genuineness of her feelings and the strength of her love more than she could ever have expressed in language. What he said must remain Madeline's secret, but when the tortured Sefton at last gained courage to intrude upon them it was a countenance transfigured by happiness that the lion-man turned upon his friend.

"It's all right, Martin," he said, and his voice was softer than Sefton had ever heard it. "I was a fool to jump to conclusions. I don't yet know what happened, but at least I am sure that neither Madeline nor you were concerned in it." His voice faltered suddenly and his eyes half closed.

"Kaspa! What is it, darling?" cried Madeline in alarm.

Sefton pointed silently to the blood running steadily down his friend's leg. He sprang forward to support the wounded man, but too late. Kaspa's great form broke from the girl's embrace and slid slowly to earth.

Sefton tore the scarf from his neck, and with hurried shaking fingers the two of them bound a tourniquet above the wound. Then Sefton took his friend upon his shoulders and bore him in the direction of camp, staggering and gasping under his enormous weight. As they went, Kaspa said no word, until the grunting of lions all about them took on a savage menacing note, then he raised his head and uttered a single high-pitched roar, weak and tremulous, but clearly conveying its meaning to his four-footed friends.

Dogo, following closely behind his leader, repeated that cry in a voice that rang through the night, and Ruka and the lionesses, still scouting for possible danger upon the outskirts of the forest, obediently turned their faces towards the rock-strewn heights and the security of their lair, grunting as they went.

Kaspa's limp hand lay in Madeline's, and, as he heard those deep sorrowful notes receding his grasp tightened and he smiled. It was a sign that he had made his choice and was content. Away up to the misty heights went the chorus of the lions, and its meaning was; "Trek, trek, brothers —Kaspa has gone from us again!"

Had she heard the siren sea calling death to her doomed love? Surely not here on a modern beach . . . but a soul-chilling warning told her he had heard it too. . . .

THE WOMEN

IT WAS as if a light came on in a green room.

The ocean burned. A white phosphorescence stirred like a breath of steam through the autumn morning sea, rising. Bubbles rose from the throat of some hidden sea ravine.

Like lightning in the reversed green sky of the sea it was, aware. It was old and beautiful. Out of the deeps it came, indolently. A shell, a wisp, a bubble, a weed, a glitter, a whisper, a gill. Suspended in its depths were brainlike trees of frosted coral, eyelike pips of yellow kelp, hairlike fluids of weed. Growing with the tides, growing with the ages, collecting and hoarding and saving unto itself identities and ancient dusts, octopus-inks and all the trivia of the sea.

Until now—it was aware.

It was a shining green intelligence, breathing in the autumn sea. Eyeless but seeing, earless but hearing, bodyless but feeling. It was of the sea. And being of the sea it was—feminine.

It in no way resembled man or woman. But it had a woman's ways, the silken, sly and hidden ways. It moved with a woman's grace. It was all the evil things of vain women.

Dark waters flowed through and by and mingled with her on the way to the gulf streams. In the water were carnival caps, horns, serpentine, confetti. They passed through her like wind through an ancient tree. Orange peels, napkins, papers, eggshells, and burnt kindling from nightfires on the beaches; all the flotsam of the gaunt high people who stalked on the lone sands of the continental islands, people from brick cities, people who shrieked in metal demons down concrete highways, gone.

She rose softly, shimmering, foaming, into cool morning airs. She lay in the swell after the long time of forming through darkness.

She perceived the shore.

The man was there.

He was a sun-darkened man with strong legs and a good chest.

Each day he should have come down to the water, to bathe, to swim, to be anywhere at all near. But he had never moved. There was a woman on the sand with him, a woman in a black bathing suit who lay next to him talking quietly, laughing. Sometimes they held hands, sometimes they listened to a little sounding machine that they dialed and out of which music came.

The phosphorescence hung quietly in the waves, anxiety returning. It was the end of the season. September. Things were shutting down.

Any day now he might go away and never return.

Today, he *must* come in the water.

They lay on the sand with the heat in them. The radio played softly and the woman in the black bathing suit stirred fitfully, eyes closed.

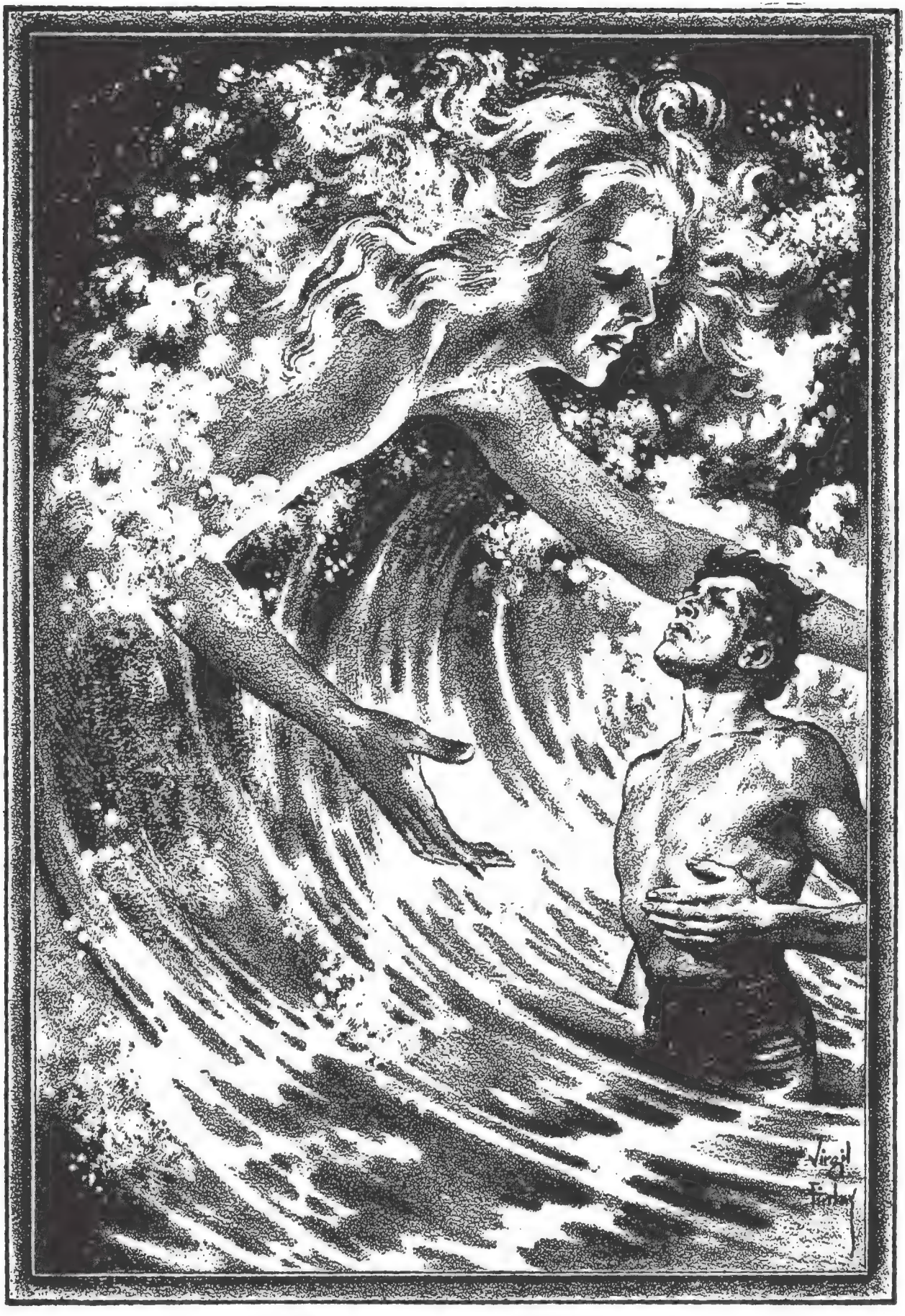
The man did not lift his head from where he cushioned it on his muscled left arm. He drank the sun with his face, his open mouth, his nostrils. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"A bad dream," said the woman in the black suit.

"Dreams in the daytime?" he asked.

"Don't *you* ever dream in the afternoon?"

By Ray Bradbury



He ran down to the shore—the sea—the waves. . . .

"I *never* dream," he said. "I've never had a dream in my life."

She lay there, fingers twitching. "God, I had a horrible dream!"

"What about?"

"I don't know," she said, as if she really didn't. It was so bad she had forgotten. Now, eyes shut, she tried to remember.

"It was about me," he said, lazily, stretching.

"No," she said.

"Yes," he said, smiling to himself. "I was off with another woman, that's what."

"No," she said.

"I insist," he said. "There I was, off with another woman, and you discovered us, and somehow, in all the mix-up, I got shot or something."

She wrenched involuntarily. "Don't *talk* that way."

"Let's see now," he said. "What sort of woman was I with? Gentlemen prefer blondes, don't they?"

"Please don't joke," she said. "I don't feel well."

He opened his eyes. "Did it affect you that much?"

She nodded. "Whenever I dream in the daytime this way, it depresses me something terribly."

"I'm sorry." He took her hand. "Anything I can get you?"

"No."

"Ice cream cone? Eskimo pie? A coke?"

"You're a dear, but no. I'll be all right. It's just that, the last four days haven't been right. This isn't like it used to be early in the summer. Something's happened."

"Not between us," he said.

"Oh, no, of course not," she said, quickly. "But don't you feel that sometimes *places* change? Even a thing like a pier changes, and the merry-go-rounds, and all that. Even the hot dogs taste different this week."

"How do you mean?"

"They taste old and funny. It's hard to explain, but I've lost my appetite, and I wish this vacation were over. Really, what I want to do most of all is go home."

"Tomorrow's our last day; can't you stick it out? You know how much this extra week means to me."

"I'll try," she said. "If only this place didn't feel so funny and changed."

"I don't think it's changed. Places never do," he said. "But people or *things* change them. Maybe we're just tired of this beach and want to go somewhere else, some other beach?"

"I don't know. But all of a sudden I just had a feeling I wanted to get up and run."

"For why? Because of your dream? Me and my blonde and me dead all of a sudden."

"Don't," she said. "Don't talk about dying that way!"

She lay there very close to him. "If I only knew what it was."

"There, there," he petted her. "I'll protect you."

"It's not me, it's you," her breath whispered in his ear. "I had the feeling that you were tired of me and went away."

"I wouldn't do that; I love you."

"I'm silly." She forced a laugh. "God, what a silly thing I am!"

They lay quietly, the sun and sky over them like a lid.

"You know," he said, thoughtfully, "I get a little of that feeling you're talking about. This place has changed. There *is* something different."

"I'm glad you feel it, too."

He shook his head, drowsily, smiling softly, shutting his eyes, drinking the sun. "Both crazy. Both crazy." Murmuring. "Both."

The sea came in on the shore three times, softly.

The afternoon came on. The sun struck the skies a grazing blow. The yachts bobbed hot and shining white in the harbor swells. The fishermen spat and lined their baited lines off the pier. The smells of fried meat and burnt onion filled the wind. The sand whispered and stirred like an image in a vast, melting mirror.

The radio at their elbow murmured discreetly. They lay like dark arrows on the white sand. They did not move. Only their eyelids flickered with awareness, only their ears were alert. Now and again their tongues might slide along their baking lips. Sly prickles of moisture appeared on their brows to be burned away by the sun.

He lifted his head, blindly, listening in the heat.

The radio sighed.

He put his head down for a minute.

She felt him lift himself again. She opened one eye and he rested on one elbow looking around, at the pier, at the sky, at the water, at the sand.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing," he said, lying down again.

"Something," she said.

"I thought I heard something."

"The radio."

"No, not the radio. Something else."

"Somebody *else's* radio."

He didn't answer. She felt his arm tense and relax, tense and relax. "Damn, it," he said. "There it is, again."

They both lay listening.

"I don't hear anything—"

"Shh!" he cried. "For God's sake—"

The waves broke on the shore, silent mirrors, heaps of melting, whispering glass.

"Somebody singing."

"What?"

"I'd swear it was someone singing."

"Nonsense."

"No, listen."

They did that for a while.

"I don't hear a thing," she said, turning very cold.

He was on his feet. There was nothing in the sky, nothing on the pier, nothing on the sand, nothing in the hot dog stands. There was a staring silence, the wind blowing over his ears, the wind preening along the light, blowing hairs of his arms and legs.

He took a step toward the sea.

"Don't!" she said.

He looked down at her, oddly, as if she were not there. He was still listening.

She turned the portable radio up full, loud. It exploded words and rhythm and melody:

"—I found a million dollar baby—"

He made a wry face, raising his open palm violently. "Turn it off!"

"No, I like it!" She turned it louder. She snapped her fingers, rocking her body vaguely, trying to smile.

"in the five and ten cent store!"

It was two o'clock.

The sun steamed the waters. The ancient pier expanded with a loud groan in the heat. The birds were held in the hot sky, unable to move. The sun struck through the green liquors that poured about the pier; struck, caught and burnished an idle whiteness that drifted in the off-shore ripples.

The white foam, the frosted coral brain, the kelp-pip, the tide dust lay in the water, spreading, seeing.

The dark man still lay on the sand, the woman in the black suit beside him.

Music drifted up like mist from the water. It was a whispering music of deep tides and passed years, of salt and travel, of accepted and familiar strangenesses. The music sounded not unlike water on the shore, rain falling, the turn of a limb in the depths. It was very soft. It was a singing of a time-lost voice in a caverned sea shell. The hissing and sighing of tides in deserted holds of treasure ships. The sound the wind makes in an empty skull thrown out on the baked sand.

But the radio up on the blanket on the beach played louder.

The phosphorescence, light as a woman, sank down, tired, from sight. Only a few more hours. They might leave at any time. If only he would come in, for an instant, just an instant. The mists stirred silently, thinking of his face and his body in the water, deep under. She thought of him caught, held, as they sank ten fathoms down, on a sluice that bore them twisting and turning in frantic gesticulations, to the depths of a hidden gulf in the sea.

The heat of his body, the water taking fire from his warmth, and the frosted coral brain, the jeweled dusts, the salted mists feeding on his hot breath from his opened lips. The foam shivering with this thought now.

The waves moved the soft and changing thoughts into the shallows which were tepid as bath waters from the two o'clock sun.

He mustn't go away. If he goes now, he'll not return.

Now. The cold coral brain drifted, drifted. *Now.* Calling across the hot spaces of windless air in the early afternoon. *Come down to the water. Now,* said the music. *Now.*

THE woman in the black bathing suit twisted the radio dial.

"Attention!" screamed the radio. "Now, today, you can buy a new car at—"

"For cripe's sake!" said the man, reaching over and tuning the scream down. "Must you have it so loud!"

"I like it loud," said the woman in the black bathing suit, looking over her shoulder at the sea.

It was three o'clock. The sky was all sun.

Sweating, he stood up. "I'm going in," he said.

"Get me a hot dog first, will you?" she said.

"Can't you wait until I come out? Must it be now?"

"Please." She pouted. *"Now."*

"Everything on it?"

"Yes, and bring *three* of them."

"Three? God, what an appetite!" He ran off to the small cafe.

She waited until he was gone. Then she

turned the radio off. She lay listening a long time. She heard nothing. She looked at the water until the glints and shatters of sun stabbed through her head, like needles driven deep.

The sea had quieted. There was only a faint, far and fine net of ripples giving off sunlight in infinite repetition. She squinted again and again at the water, scowling.

He bounded back. "Damn, but the sand's hot; burns my feet off!" He flung himself on the blanket. "Eat 'em up!"

She took the three hot dogs and fed quietly on one of them. When she finished it, she handed him the remaining two. "Here, you finish them. My eyes are bigger than my stomach."

He eyed her petulantly. "All right." He swallowed the hot dogs in silence. "Next time," he said, finishing, don't order more than you can use. It's a helluva waste."

"Here," she said, unscrewing a thermos, "you must be thirsty. Finish our lemonade."

"Thanks." He drank. Then he slapped his hands together and said, "Well, I'll go jump in the water now." He looked anxiously at the bright sea.

"Just one more thing," she said, just remembering it. "Will you buy me a bottle of sun-tan oil? I'm all out."

"Haven't you some in your purse?"

"I used it all."

"I wish you'd told me when I was up there buying the hot dogs," he said, irritably. "But, okay." He ran back, loping steadily.

When he was gone, she took the sun-tan bottle from her purse, half full, unscrewed the cap, and poured the liquid into the sand, covering it over surreptitiously, looking out at the sea, and smiling. She rose then and went down to the edge of the sea and looked out, searching the innumerable small and insignificant waves.

'You can't have him, she thought. Whoever or whatever you are, he's mine, and you can't have him. I don't know what's going on; I don't know anything, really. All I know is we're going on a train tonight at seven if I have to take him bodily along. And we won't be here tomorrow. So you can just stay here and wait, ocean, sea, or whatever it is that's wrong here today.

She wanted to say this out loud, because she knew it was right. But she said nothing, for others might think her blazed, ruined by the odd sunlight and the quiet waters.

Do your damnedest; you're no match for me, she thought. She picked up a stone and threw it at the sea.

"There!" she cried. "You."

* * *

He was standing beside her.

"Oh?" she jumped back.

"It's only me from over the sea," he sang. "Barnacle Bill the Sailor!" He bit her neck and she thrashed playfully in his grasp. "Hey, what gives? You standing here muttering?"

"Was I?" She was surprised at herself. "Where's the sun-tan oil? Will you put it on my back?"

He poured a yellow twine of oil and massaged it onto her golden back. She looked out at the water from time to time, eyes sly, nodding at the water as if to say, "Look! You see? Ah-ha!" She purred like a kitten.

"There." He gave her the bottle.

He was half into the water before she screamed.

"Where are you going! Come here!"

He turned as if she were someone he didn't know. "For God's sake, what's wrong?"

"Why, you just finished your hot dogs and lemonade—you can't go in the water now and get cramps!"

He scoffed. "Old wives' tales."

"Just the same, you come back up on the sand and wait an hour before you go in, do you hear? I won't have you getting a cramp and drowning."

"Ah," he said, disgusted.

"Come along." She turned, and he followed, looking back at the sea.

* * *

Three o'clock. Four.

The change came at four-ten. Lying on the sand, the woman in the black suit saw it coming and relaxed. The clouds had been forming since three. Now, with a sudden rush, the fog came in from off the bay. Where it had been warm, now it was cold. A wind blew up out of the nothing. Darker clouds moved in.

"It's going to rain," she said, proudly.

"You sound absolutely pleased," he observed, sitting with arms folded. "Maybe our last day, and you sound pleased because it's clouding up."

"The weather man," she confided, "said there'd be thunder showers all tonight and tomorrow. It might be a good idea to leave tonight."

"We'll stay, just in case it clears. I want to get one more day of swimming in, anyway," he said. "I haven't been in the water yet today."

"We've had so much fun talking and eating, time passes."

"Yeah," he said, looking at his hands.

The fog flailed across the sand in soft strips.

"There," she said. "That was a raindrop on my nose!" She laughed ridiculously at it. Her eyes were bright and young again. She was almost triumphant. "Good old rain."

"Why are you so pleased?" he demanded. "You're an odd duck!"

"Come on, rain!" she said. "Well, help me with these blankets. We'd better run!"

He picked up the blankets slowly, preoccupied. "Not even one last swim, damn it.

"I've a mind to take just one dive." He smiled at her. "Only a minute!"

"No." Her face paled. "You'll catch cold, and I'll have to nurse you!"

"Okay, okay." He turned away from the sea. Gentle rain began to fall.

Marching ahead of him, she headed for the hotel. She was singing softly to herself.

"Hold on!" he said.

She halted. She did not turn. She only listened to his voice far away.

"Why, there's someone out there, in the water!" he cried. "Drowning!"

She couldn't move. She heard his feet running.

"Wait here!" he shouted. "I'll be right back! There's someone there! A woman, I think!"

"Let the lifeguards get her!" cried the woman in the black suit, whirling.

"Aren't any! Off duty; late!" He ran down to the shore, the sea, the waves.

"Come back!" she screamed. "There's no one out there! Don't, oh, don't!"

"Don't worry, I'll be right back!" he called. "She's drowning out there, see?"

The fog came in, the rain pattered down, a white flashing light raised in the waves. He ran, and the woman in the black suit ran after him, scattering beach implements behind her, crying, tears rushing from her eyes. "Don't!" she said. She put out her hands.

He leaped into an onrushing dark wave.

The woman in the black bathing suit waited in the rain.

At six o'clock the sun set somewhere behind black clouds. The rain rattled softly on the water, a distant drum snare.

Under the sea, a move of illuminant white.

The soft shape, the foam, the weed lay in the shallows. Among the stirring glitter, deep under, was the man.

Fragile. The foam bubbled and broke. The frosted coral brain rang against a pebble with hidden thought. Fragile men. So fragile. Like dolls, they break. Nothing, nothing to them. A minute under water and they're sick and pay no attention and they vomit out and kick and then, suddenly, just lie there, doing nothing. Doing nothing at all. How strange and how disappointing, after all the days of waiting.

What to do with him now? His head lolls, his mouth opens, his eyelids loosen, his eyes stare, his skin pales. Silly man, wake up! Wake up!

The water raced about him.

The man hung limply, loosely, mouth agape.

The phosphorescence, the green hair weed withdrew.

He was released. A wave carried him back to the silent shore. Back to his wife, who was waiting for him there in the cold rain.

The rain poured over the black waters.

Distantly, under the leaden skies; from the twilight shore, a woman screamed.

Ah— the ancient dusts stirred sluggishly in the water—isn't that *like* a woman? Now, *she* doesn't want him, *either!*

At seven o'clock the rain fell thick. It was night and very cold and the hotels all along the sea had to turn on the heat.

(Continued from page 9)

Although I can't say as I ever heard of the author, she is one of my favorites, if she can write stuff like that. A touch of deCamp, and a strain of T. H. White (remember "Sword in the Stone"?).

And the pix were good, too. I think Finlay could have done a much better job, but Lawrence was sufficient, if a bit too conventional in spots.

The shorts were up to standard, especially Les Croutch's short. I like to see fans make the proz, and so many of them are doing it, nowadays! Stan Mullen, Tom Pace, Bill Oberfield, and now Les. I guess I'll have to drag out my old typer, and try my hand at it!

The reader column was its usual self, and the Masters of Fantasy was good as usual. I'm still waiting to see Stapledon and Burroughs in there.

While I am still at it, let me add my voice to the torrent of applause over the return of *Fantastic Novels*, long one of my faves. The choice of fiction has been consistently good for the two issues so far, and with the unlimited Munsey store to draw from, F.N. should prosper for years to come.

Yours for fantasy,

LIN CARTER.

1734 Newark St. So.,
St. Petersburg, Fla.

PRAISE FROM TASMANIA

Today I had a lovely surprise to see my first subscription issue of F.F.M. arrive, namely April '48. My last issue is that of April '41. Seven years of vacancy—it makes me wonder what issues I've missed. Thus I hope you will print this so that a fan—down under—may be able to obtain some of these missing issues. I am willing to exchange stamps or some Australian Science Fiction for them.

The Futurian Society of Australia, to which I belong, was re-formed last year and is doing a very good job in keeping the Australian S.F. fans together, its headquarters being in Sydney. Other than the 20 or so fans connected with this, there do not appear to be many S.F. readers in Australia, as British reprint editions of another magazine are the only material in science fiction available and then few and far between. The Society within itself should be quite powerful in a few years and it will keep the name of Australia in Science Fiction Fandom.

Once again I must say how struck I am with this copy of F.F.M. You seem to have made great changes in story matter since '41. (I understand there's been a change in firms, etc.) thought I must say I would still have liked to have some of the classics then, but I'm not worrying. I might add here what F.F.M.s there are in Australia are highly prized and I don't think anyone would want to part with them. Still here's hoping they may be available from the U.S.A.

DONALD R. TUCK.

17 Audley St.,
North Robart, Tasmania.

MR. STAMP PROTESTS

I resented very much Mr. Philip Gray's remark concerning the recent "Since '46 Poll" that I conducted through the Viewpoint.

I imagine 52 other fans who are ardent readers of the Viewpoints, feel as I do. After all, Mr. Gray, just because they liked "People of the Ruins" is no reason to label them—"Misguided amateurish people".

As for new readers taking part in the poll—possibly you are right—how do I know; and yet, they may have been reading fantasy when you and I were reading Ma Goose.

After all, 215 fans are only a small percentage of the reading public of F.F.M. Perhaps if more ballots had been received, the standing of "Before the Dawn" may not have been so low.

I also would like to conduct a poll, starting with "Ark of Fire" and ending with the present issue—"The Devil's Spoon."

This poll should prove interesting, therefore all you poor misguided and amateurish people, address your comments to yours truly as soon as possible, stating your favorite story to appear in F.F.M. since "Ark of Fire" up until "The Devil's Spoon".

I'll be expecting one of the first from Mr. Gray, so don't disappoint me, sir.

One of the Misguided,

J. J. STAMP.

Norval,
Ontario, Canada.

MASTERS OF FANTASY GOOD

Ah, the cover! Not since the same artist's Butterfly-Girl have I seen such a composition of colors so well blended. Fine, Finlay, need I say how much better this is than the one for "The Peacemaker"? Somehow or other I have come to like that face—whether it is worn by Nimir, Iblees, the Rebel Soul's demon maker, or any lords of the lower regions. The interiors, too, are quite good, Lawrence's bordered conception of the golden city and the rider being, perhaps, the best.

Many thanks for consenting to give us John Taine back again after an absence of over two years. I'm sure most of us will like "The Purple Sapphire."

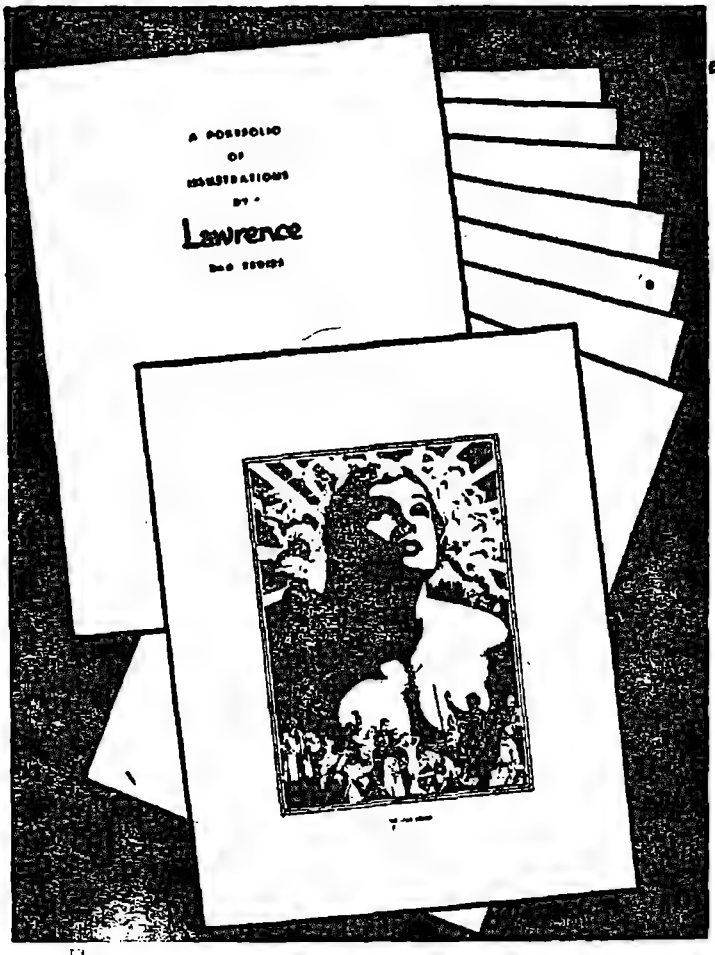
Can I take this as being a trend back to the masters?

Du Bois' "The Devil's Spoon" was whimsical and light fantasy; it dragged in many places, yet withal I liked it, if for no other reason than Haroot and his woes.

I hope there are more stories in Jack London's "Moon Face and Other Stories" worth reprinting in F.F.M. For London was ever one of my literary gods and I welcomed "The Shadow and the Flash" with naught less than joy. Croutch's "Eemanu Grows Up" was all right, not too good, not too bad. Much luck to the budding author.

The Readers' Viewpoint is a good place to spend the rest of this letter; sometimes amusing, always interesting, and never disappointing,

(Continued on page 116)



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THE HUMAN ANGLE

By William Tenn

WHAT a road! What filthy, dismal, blinding rain! And, by the ghost of old Horace Greeley, what an idiotic, impossible assignment!

John Shellinger cursed the steamy windshield from which a monotonous wiper flipped raindrops. He stared through the dripping, half-clear triangle of glass and tried to guess which was broken country road and which was the overgrown brown vegetation of autumn. He might have passed the slowly moving line of murderous men stretching to right and left across country and road; he might have angled off into a side-road and be heading off into completely forsaken land. But he didn't think he had.

What an assignment!

"Get the human angle on this vampire hunt," Randall had ordered. "All the other news services will be giving it the hillbilly twist, medieval superstition messing up the atomic world. What dumb jerks these dumb jerks are! You stay off that line. Find yourself a weepy individual slant on bloodsucking and sob me about three thousand words. And keep your expense account down—you just can't work a big swindle sheet out of that kind of agricultural slum."

So I saddles my convertible, Shellinger thought morosely, and I tools off to the pappy-mammy country where nobody speaks to strangers nohow "specially now, 'cause the vampire done got to three young 'uns already." And nobody will tell me the names of those three kids or whether any of them are still alive; and Randall's wires keep asking when I'll start sending usable copy; and I still can't find one loquacious Louise in the whole country. Wouldn't even have known of this cross-country hunt if I hadn't begun to wonder where all the men in town had disappeared to on such an unappetizing, rainy evening.

The road was bad in second, but it was impossible in almost any other gear. The ruts weren't doing the springs any good, either. Shellinger rubbed moisture off the glass with his handkerchief and wished he had another pair of headlights. He could hardly see.

That dark patch ahead, for instance. Might be one of the vampire posse. Might be some beast driven out of cover by the brush-beating. Might even be a little girl.

He ground into his brake. It was a girl. A little girl with dark hair and blue jeans. He twirled the crank and stuck his head out into the falling rain.

What greater folly than to seek out the human angle in a thing that belongs not to humanity?

DONALD CLYNE

"Hey, kid. Want a lift?"

The child stooped slightly against the somber background of night and decaying, damp countryside. Her eyes scanned the car, came back to his face and considered it. The kid had probably not known that this chromium-plated kind of post-war auto existed. She'd certainly never dreamed of riding in one. It would give her a chance to crow over the other kids in the 'tater patch.

Evidently deciding that he wasn't the kind of stranger her mother had warned her about and that it would be less uncomfortable in the car than walking in the rain and mud, she nodded. Very slowly, she came around the front and climbed in at his right.

"Thanks, mister," she said.

Shellinger started again and took a quick, sidewise glance at the girl. Her blue jeans were raggedy and wet. She must be terribly cold and uncomfortable, but she wasn't going to let him know. She would bear up under it with the stoicism of the hill people.

But she was frightened. She sat hunched up, her hands folded neatly in her lap, at the far side of the seat right up against the door. What was the kid afraid of? Of course, the vampire!

"How far up do you go?" he asked her gently.

" 'Bout a mile and a half. But that way." She pointed over her shoulder with a pudgy thumb. She was plump, much more flesh on her than most of these scrawny, share-cropped kids. She'd be beautiful, too, some day, if some illiterate lummox didn't cart her off to matrimony and hard work in a drafty cabin.

Regretfully, he maneuvered around on the road, got the car turned and started back. He'd miss the hunters, but you couldn't drag an impressionable child into that sort of grim nonsense. He might as well take her home first. Besides, he wouldn't get anything out of those uncommunicative farmers with their sharpened stakes and silver bullets in their squirrel rifles.

"What kind of crops do your folks raise —tobacco or cotton?"

"They don't raise nothing yet. We just came here."

"Oh." That was right: she didn't have a mountain accent. Come to think of it, she was a little more diginified that most of the children he'd met in this neighborhood. "Isn't it a little late to go for a stroll? Aren't your folks afraid to let you out this late with a vampire around?"

She shivered. "I—I'm careful," she said at last.

Hey! Shellinger thought. Here was the human angle. Here was what Randall was bleating about. A frightened little girl with enough curiosity to swallow her big lump of fear and go out exploring on this night of all others. He didn't know how it fitted, just yet—but his journalistic nose was twitching. There was copy here; the basic, colorful human angle was sitting fearfully on his red leather seat.

"Do you know what a vampire is?"

She looked at him, startled, dropped her eyes and studied her folded hands for words. "It's—it's like someone who needs people instead of meals." A hesitant pause. "Isn't it?"

"Ye-es." That was good. Trust a child to give you a fresh viewpoint, unspoiled by textbook superstition. He'd use that—"People instead of meals." "A vampire is supposed to be a person who will be immortal—not die, that is—so long as he or she gets blood and life from living people. The only way you can kill a vampire—"

"You turn right here, mister."

HE POINTED the car into the little branchlet of side road. It was annoyingly narrow; surprised wet boughs tapped the windshield, ran their leaves lazily across the car's fabric top. Once in a while, a tree top sneezed collected rain water down.

Shellinger pressed his face close to the windshield and tried to decipher the picture of brown mud amid weeds that his headlights gave him. "What a road! Your folks are really starting from scratch. Well, the only way to kill a vampire is with a silver bullet. Or you can drive a stake through the heart and bury it in a crossroads at midnight. That's what those men are going to do tonight if they catch it." He turned his head as he heard her gasp. "What's the matter—don't you like the idea?"

"I think it's horrid," she told him emphatically.

"Why? How do you feel—live and let live?"

She thought it over, nodded, smiled. "Yes. Live and let live. Live and let live. After all—" She was having difficulty finding the right words again. "After all, some people can't help what they are. I mean," very slowly, very thoughtfully, "like if a

person's a vampire, what can they do about it?"

"You've got a good point there, kid." He went back to studying what there was of the road. "The only trouble's this: if you believe in things like vampires, well, you don't believe in them good—you believe in them nasty. Those people back in the village who claim three children have been killed or whatever it was by the vampire, they hate it and want to destroy it. If there are such things as vampires—mind you, I said 'if'—then, by nature, they do such horrible things that any way of getting rid of them is right. See?"

"No. You shouldn't drive stakes through people."

Shellinger laughed. "I'll say you shouldn't. Never could like that deal myself. However, if it were a matter of a vampire to me or mine, I think I could overcome my squeamishness long enough to do a little roustabout work on the stroke of twelve."

He paused and considered that this child was a little too intelligent for her environment. She didn't seem to be bollixed with superstitions as yet, and he was feeding her *Shellinger on Black Magic.* That was vicious. He continued soberly, "The difficulty with those beliefs is that a bunch of grown men who hold them are spread across the countryside tonight because they think a vampire is on the loose. And they're likely to flush some poor hobo and finish him off gruesomely for no other reason than that he can't give a satisfactory explanation for his presence in the fields on a night like this."

Silence. She was considering his statement. Shellinger liked her dignified, thoughtful attitude. She was a bit more at ease, he noticed, and was sitting closer to him. Funny how a kid could sense that you wouldn't do her any harm. Even a country kid. Especially a country kid, come to think of it, because they lived closer to nature or something.

He had won her confidence, though, and consequently rewon his. A week of living among thin-lipped ignoramuses who had been not at all diffident in showing *their* disdain had made him a little uncertain. This was better. And he'd finally gotten a line on the basis of a story.

Only, he'd have to dress it up. In the story, she'd be an ordinary hill-billy kid, much thinner, much more unapproachable; and the quotes would all be in "mountain" dialect.

Yes, he had the human interest stuff now.

She had moved closer to him again, right against his side. Poor kid! His body warmth made the wet coldness of her jeans a little less uncomfortable. He wished he had a heater in the car.

The road disappeared entirely into tangled bushes and gnarly trees. He

stopped the car, flipped the emergency back.

"You don't live here? This place looks as if nothing human's been around for years."

He was astonished at the uncultivated desolation.

"Sure I live here, mister," her warm voice said at his ear. "I live in that little house over there."

"Where?" He rubbed at the windshield and strained his vision over the sweep of headlights. "I don't see any house. "Where is it?"

"There." A plump hand came up and waved at the night ahead. "Over there."

"I still can't see—" The corner of his right eye had casually noticed that the palm of her hand was covered with fine brown hair.

Strange, that.

Was covered with fine brown hair. Her palm!

"What *was* that you remembered about the shape of her teeth?" his mind shrieked. He started to whip his head around, to get another look at her teeth. But he couldn't.

Because her teeth were in his throat.

(Continued from page 110)

TRV is one of the best features of F.F.M. and has been since November, 1939. Ever and anon comes a request for either "Frankenstein" or "Dracula." Bob Boyer makes the latest such request and I must take exception with him for the following reasons. In the Gothic novel by Mrs. Shelley, "Frankenstein," there are to be found many beautiful passages, it is true. But it is too definitely dated to its time, almost a third of the tale is taken up with inconsequent ramblings that only remotely concern the monster or its maker, some of the premises are nearly laughable in light of the present day and the characterization and the rest isn't. Of Stoker's vampire story less can be said, it is as dated as most of Jules Verne's tales are.

While on this subject I may as well put in my vote to exclude Burroughs; his works, too, are readily available. Most of them, anyhow.

Ha, and no Stapledon, either. I don't like him. For philosophy I'll take Nietzsche, Spencer, or James—they're much better.

Too bad F.F.M. isn't monthly so more Masters of Fantasy could be printed. Austin's portrayal of Wells was very good. Wells, like London, was more than just another writer to me. Perhaps he saw too well through the Master Hoax, yet there was a gentleness running throughout his works that one could not help noticing. Ah, yes, a super man, indeed. And yet still very human, for otherwise he could not have understood man so well, would never have replaced our masks after removing them.

In closing, what about that next folio? And "The World Below"?

Your reader and, too often, critic,

PHILIP GRAY.

Ellsworth Falls, Maine.

COMPLIMENTING NEIL AUSTIN

Thanks for printing my last letter in the June F.F.M.—it'd completely slipped my mind that I'd written one. I was reminded of it by a note from a book-company, who said they'd seen my letter, so I searched the newsstands, and there it was; F.F.M. in all its glory, with a wonderul cover! Who cares if it doesn't represent any specific scene; none of them ever do, these days, but, oh! that Finlay! Whaddaman! And whoever drew the pics on pages 9, 21, 41, Lawrence, I think it must have been, is okay, as well as page 81. However, I think page 61 has the best pic in the story, which wasn't quite as good in spots as it might have been. The story, I mean, not the illos. Why couldn't Iblees have won his little battle over humanity for one more time? Too much wishy-wash is no-darn-good fiction. I suppose there are other readers who'd love to see evil win out in the end, if it wouldn't affect their smug, secure little everyday lives, and might enjoy a slight change themselves. However, most of us are satisfied to read about such things, and let the authors and characters do the dangerous work, *nicht wahr?* The other class joins the Military, like me, in peacetime.

I repeat my previous statement; Masters of Fantasy is one thing I'll never want to see F.F.M. without, now that you've got it going so well. And Neil Austin does a good job at it, too. I haven't yet read beyond it, but I see Jack London's got something in this issue, so it must be good.

I've got a few back issues, running from November 1947 or so to current issues of the following: *Amazing*, ASF, FFM, FN, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Thrilling Wonder*, *Startling*, and *Weird*, Winter and Spring *Amazing Quarterly*, and Spring & Summer of *Planet*. I'd like to sell them, or swap for books on the general field covered by FFM FN, and the sort of thing printed in the above listed mags. And I'd like to hear from Mrs. Nicholas of Ohio; I've lost her address.

EVERETT ALLEN, PFC.

Co. A, 211th Inf., F. N. G.
1735 N. W. 1st St.,
Miami 35, Florida.

P. S. Still looking for gun clubs or gun fans hereabouts. Any bids or names? I'm an NRA member, if that's any help.

"DEVIL'S SPOON" DELECTABLE!

Other morons to the contrary, the letter section is the most important part of F.F.M., so kwite natch that is the *only* place to start blabbing about the virtues of your grrrrrand and glorrrrrious publication.

There's Decil again, in "———" yet. The character must be mentally deficient to make as many spelling mistakes as he did in that thing. Could be the typographer, huh? Outside of that ghastly mistake, Viewpoint went gyrating along with all jets flashing. Commercialism reared its ugly head, organized fen, the novice, male, female, civilian, soldier, American, Canadian, Englishman, genius, egoist, and Decil all put in their twenty-five cents worth.

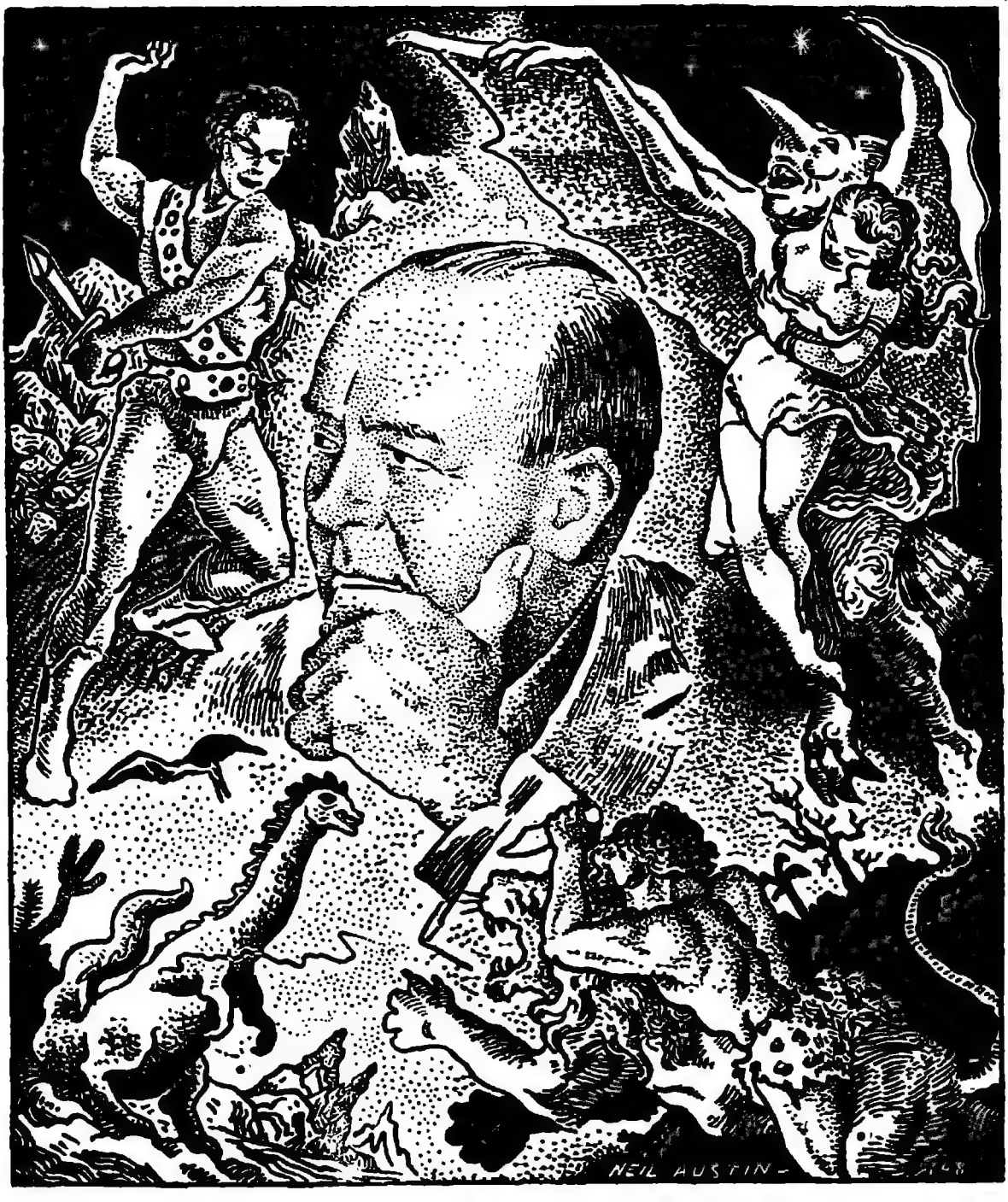
Finlay, Finlay, up and up with Finlay! June's cover was, to use a somewhat stereotyped expresion, peachy. Virgil is back in harness by the looks of this drawing. What more could a devotee ask for? Mr. Salvador Dali may drop dead.

And, wonder of wonders, a request of mine was answered. Though U cut it out of my letter, I requested a fantasy dealing with heaven and/or hell. Up come ye with "The Devil's Spoon" real quick-like. Of course U had the novel scheduled months before my request, but I like to build up my ego. The story itself—quite stuffy, quite feminine in treatment, quite delectable, and thoroughly enjoyable!

I'm just wondering now how a more realistic writer like Craig Rice would have treated the theme. It was one of the most feminine novels I've ever read, and quite a relief from the thud-and-blunder that U've been giving us lately. It was really keen to actually read a true *fantasy* instead of an adventure yarn.

Leave us have more, more, more of this type of story!

(Continued on page 121)



MASTERS of FANTASY

Edgar Rice Burroughs: Tarzan! Barsoom! Pellucidar!

Seventy-three years young, E. R. B. has recently produced the 10th in his Mars Series, "Llana of Gathol". His first, called "Under the Moons of Mars", written under the pseudonym Norman Bean, was serialized in *All-Story* in 1912. Seldom has a writer so captured the world's imagination. His books have been translated into scores of languages, including Esperanto. His immortal ape-man, Tarzan, has been comic-stripped, heard on the air, and out-lived a dozen actors who have portrayed him on the screen. His characters—John Carter, the Swordsman of Mars; the incomparable Dejah Thoris; David Innes of the Earth's Core; Tanar of Pellucidar; Carson of Venus—have thrilled literally millions. His "Moon Maid" is considered a science fiction classic. He is the idol of the fantastic adventure fans.

★ ***Grimly, alone, he fought his spectral battle —the man who could not die . . . yet never quite succeeded in living. . . .***

THAT LOW

By
Theodore Sturgeon

THERE was a "psychic" operating on Vine Street. Fowler went to see her. Not that he had any faith in mumbo-jumbo; far from it. He had been told that this Mrs. Hallowell worked along strict logical lines. That's why he went. He liked the sound of that, being what he was. He went to her and asked her if there were any good reason for not killing himself. She said he couldn't do it. Not "You won't." She said, "You can't."

This Fowler was a failure specialist, in the sense that a man is a carburetor specialist or a drainage specialist or a nerve specialist. You don't get to be that kind of specialist without spending a lot of time with carburetors or drainage layouts or nerves. You don't stay nice and objective about it, either. You get in it up to the elbows, up to the eyeballs. Fowler was a man who knew all that one man could know about failure. He knew all of the techniques, from the small social failure of letting his language forget what room of the house he was in, through a declaration of war on the clock and the calendar (every appointment and schedule in his life was a battle lost) to the crowning stupidity of regarding his opinions as right purely because they were his opinions. So he had fallen and floundered through life, never following through, jumping when he should have crept, and lying down at sprinting-time. He could have written a book on the subject of failure, except for the fact that if he had, it might have been a success . . . and he hated failure. Well, you don't have to love your specialty to be a specialist. You just have to live with it.

It was understandable, therefore, that he should be impressed by Mrs. Hallowell's reputation for clarity and logic, for he truly believed that here was a kindred spirit. He brought his large features and his flaccid handshake to her and her office, which were cool. The office was Swedish modern and blond. Mrs. Hallowell was dark, and said, "Sit down. Your name?"

"Maxwell Fowler."

"Occupation?"

"Engineer."

She glanced up. She had aluminum eyes. "Not a graduate engineer." It was not a question.

"I would of been," said Fowler, "except for a penny-ante political situation in the school. There was a fellow—"

"Yes," she said. "Married?"

"I was. You know, the kind that will kick a man when he's down. She was a—"

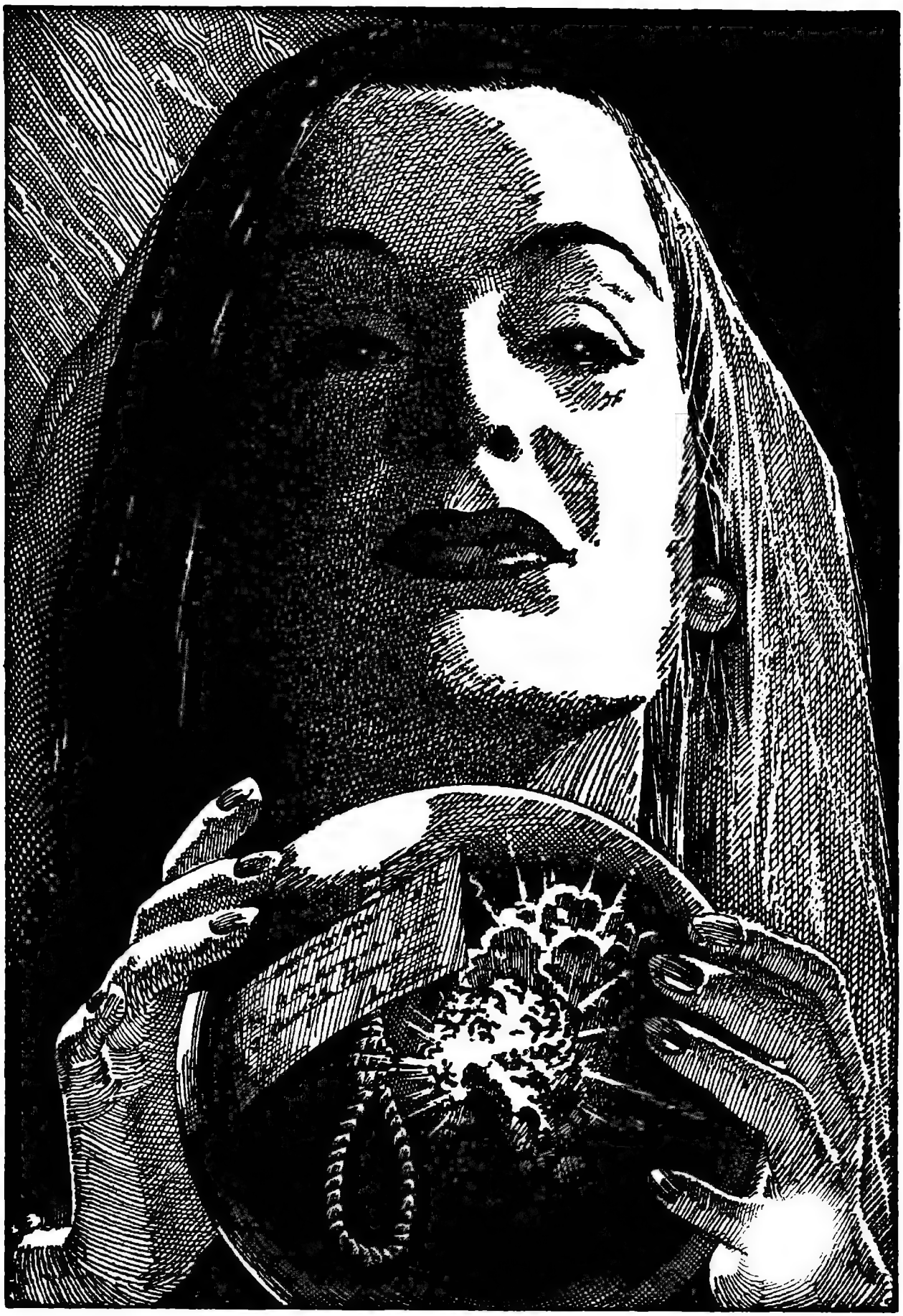
"Now, Mr. Fowler. What was it you wanted here?"

"I hear you can foretell the future."

"I'm not interested in gossip," she said, and it was the only cautionary thing she said in the entire interview. "I know about people, that's all."

He said, "Ever since I could walk and talk, people have been against me. I can whip one or two or sometimes a half dozen or more, but by and large I'm outnumbered. I'm tired. Sometimes I think I'll check out."

"Are you going to ask me if you should?"



"You will never succeed in anything," the "psychic" said. "You will not even be able to commit suicide."

"No. If I will."

She said, "All right. I don't give advice. I just tell about what's going to happen."

"What's going to happen?"

"Fill out a check. Leave the amount blank and don't sign it. Give it to me."

"But—"

"You wouldn't pay me afterward."

"My word's as good as—" and then he looked into the eyes. He got out his checkbook. When he had done as she asked, she took a pen and wrote on the check.

"That's foolish," he said.

"You have it, though."

"Yes, I have, but—"

"Sign it," she said casually, "or go away."

He signed it. "Well?"

She hesitated. There was something—

"Well?" he rapped again. "What will I do? I'm tired of all this persecution."

"Your tenses are mixed up." She smiled. "Do you want to know what you should do? Or what you shall do?"

"What shall I do?"

She wet her lips. "You shall live a long and unhappy life."

"It can't be any unhappier than it is."

"I said nothing comparative."

"Then I don't want to live a long life."

"You shall, however."

"Not if I don't want to," he said grimly. "I'm tired, I tell you."

She shook her head. "You've gone too far," she said, not unkindly. "You can't change it."

"Any time I don't like it, I can kill myself."

That was when she told him he couldn't. He was very angry, but she did not give him back his check. By the time he thought of stopping payment on it, it had cleared the bank. He went on living his life.

But Mrs. Hallowell had one bad moment over the matter. She started up out of her sleep one night, thinking about Fowler.

"Oh, how awful," she said. "I made a mistake!"

SHE phoned in the morning. Fowler was not there. He had just decided to kill himself. The amount he had paid Mrs. Hallowell made it impossible for him to meet a certain vital obligation, and since his efforts to borrow failed, he had no choice but to face his creditor. Or to kill himself. So he got a piece of rope and made a noose and put it around his neck. He tied the other end to the leg of the radiator and jumped out the window. He was a big man. The rope held, but the leg broke off the radiator. He fell six stories, struck the canvas marquee, tore through it and fell heavily to the sidewalk. There was quite a crowd there to listen to the noises he made because of what was broken.

Mrs. Hallowell called and called until someone answered who could tell her what had happened. The someone said, "Is there any message I could send to him?" And Mrs. Hallowell said, "No. No, there isn't. He'll find out when the time comes."

Fowler took a while to mend, during which he developed a scheme to clear himself with his creditors. Some money was entrusted to him and he stole it, and before he could sink it into his new plan, he was billed for the hospital expenses and threatened with a suit. He could not handle the suit. He paid the money to the hospital and his money-making scheme fell through. He determined to kill himself.

While he was bleeding in the bathroom from his opened wrists, the tenant in the next apartment, who had a bad cold, lit a match in a gas-filled kitchen and blew the end of the building out. Fowler was picked up from the wreckage, still bleeding. They saved him that time, too. It was a lot of trouble. They had to take this and that off, and the other out. He was put, finally, in a very short bed with a mass of equipment beside him, which hummed and clicked all the time. The equipment circulated fluids, and another part of it dripped into a tube, and another part pressured him gently to hold his breathing. It was all highly efficient.

That was the trouble with Mrs. Hallowell's talent. It lay in such broad lines. No details. A mistake could cover a lot of territory. Her mistake showed up after Fowler had been in that short bed for two months.

People came by and clucked their tongues when they saw him. There was a bright-eyed, dry-faced old lady who put flowers near him every couple of weeks. Everybody was sorry for him, and everybody always would be, as long as he lived, which would be very nearly as long as the equipment could be kept running. A long time. A long life. Mrs. Hallowell had been perfectly right, there. Where she made her mistake was in thinking that he would be unhappy. He didn't work. He didn't move very much. He just lay and was served and people were sorry. Maxwell Fowler was quite happy.

(Continued from page 116)

No comments on the shorts.

In my very narrow-minded viewpoint, Virgil F. still does a better job on interiors than Lawrence. Finlay, as illustrated by this cover, can excel in producing malignant characters, but Lawrence does do a superlative job on a cover. Oh, well, who am I to judge!

Yes, good people, I still have hundreds of magazines left. U takes yer choice an U pay yer dough. What U need, I got—maybe!

Oh, yeah, F.N. is quite gorgeous. It's shore nice t'know that the Munsey masterpieces will again see light. It should go over big!

Happily,

DECIL.

170 "C" St., Apt. No. 2,
Upland, California.

TOO MUCH LOVE INTEREST

"The Devil's Spoon," in the June issue of your (usually) most wonderful magazine, was rather a disappointment. Mrs. Du Bois starts off with a bang, and lays groundwork for a fantasy chock full of philosopher's meat. But for some reason she ignored the idea of a theme completely, shaping it into just another drawn-out love story. Love interest is certainly all right in a fantasy story—don't get me wrong there. Take for instance "The Peacemaker", which I consider to be a fantastic classic. Love interest was there, but it did not interfere with that story's powerful theme.

However, the promise of a Taine story for August more than makes up for this issue. How about printing Haggard's hard-to-get "Heu-Heu the Monster" in the future?

And let me add my congratulations (altho' somewhat belated) to the countless others you must have received upon reviving F.N. I hope you reprint everything of Merritt's . . . and how about some of those Burroughs stories never published in book form, such as "The Red Star of Tarzan"?

Incidentally, I have in my possession several fantasy books that I'm interested in trading for ones not in my collection. They are: Haggard's "Allan Quatermain" (profusely illustrated), Burroughs' "The Land That Time Forgot", S. F. Wright's "Deluge" and "Island of Capt. Sparrow", Algernon Blackwood's "Shocks" (like new; with dust-jacket). Jack London's "Before Adam". If anyone is interested in any of these, drop me a card and probably a swap can be arranged.

RETLAW SNEVETS.

1041 Cayuga St.,
Santa Cruz, Calif.

ABOUT QUALITY FANTASY

Since the end of the war, F.F.M. has made great strides in the fiction and above all the fantasy field, and it is not at all surprising to me that it is the only STF magazine to disappear from the newsstands so quickly and into the hands of the ardent readers and admirers that your magazine has created. Today, the demand for fantasy is greater than it has ever been before and the cry for better fantasy is louder than it has ever been; unfortunately, though, many of the numerous publications that clutter the newsstands do not meet up to the demands of the true fantasy reader and when a fan has finally run through the gauntlet of reading torture that some STF magazines so carelessly provide, he has finally decided never to buy the magazine again and continue reading those that satisfy him with good reading.

Some magazines of STF have dwindled to their native nothingness while others have continued to survive on a shoestring but this can never be said of F.F.M., which has demonstrated there are classics in fantasy and with the resurrection of F.N. this has come to be a fact. We can never have too much of these two magazines and even if they were published weekly they would sell just as fast as they do now, if not faster. It would be a great thrill if F.F.M. and F.N. came out monthly and that would mean that you would only have more readers to your already large following. Truly, this should have been done months ago but it can be understood that you as well as many others were curtailed by the paper shortage that existed only a short time ago and so we sympathize with you. However, we have been deprived of good reading too long and I, as well as many others, await with enthusiasm the day when both magazines come to us more often.

It it is possible, I would like to see some of the works of Burroughs in F.F.M., since many of his stories were never printed in magazines and are only available in book form; also, some of the lesser known works of Bierce, Wells and Dunsany; it would also be good if we had more of Taine, England and Hodgson since many of us would like to see more of their works.

Before I finish I would like to announce that I would appreciate having any correspondence from Fans who are interested in fantasy and who would like to swap mags or books and who want to exchange ideas on fantasy and STF, and I especially invite correspondence from fans from the British Isles and from other parts of the world.

THOMAS BECK.

116 West 45th St.,
New York 20, N. Y.

JUNE ISSUE REVIEWED

Just finished June. "The Devil's Spoon" is good, but I would have wound it up with a terrible fight, Haroot against Iblees, the former finally winning out by the help of Michael. The end is satisfactory, but no special kick to it. "The Shadow and the Flash," on the contrary, is All fight; being Jack London, it would be. "Eemanu Grows Up" is plumb logical—only maybe the bugs will be the ones to take over; there are so many more of 'em. Someone wrote a story about that, too—don't remember the author or title, though.

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fantasy books we want—more good ones coming out all the time—and most libraries have few if any. If readers would all write the Public Libraries where they live, requesting purchase of the books they want, giving title, author and *publisher,* it might have the desired effect, and of course, the more requests the better.

And don't forget my previous request, to publish in some future issue of *Fantastic Novels,* "The Fire People," by Ray Cummings, which appeared serially in either *Argosy* or *All-Story* quite a few years ago. I'm not even sure it was by Cummings, but I am sure of the title. It was during one of the periods when for several weeks I couldn't spare the dime.

JOHN R. JARVIS.

Apt. 202
225 Mass. Ave. N. E.
Washington 2, D. C.

MORE OF THE SAME, PLEASE!

Congratulations on your latest issue. "The Devil's Spoon," as far as I'm concerned is the best novel you have printed since "Minimum Man" last summer. I don't see why you can't have more stories like those shorts, "The Shadow and the Flash," and "Eemanu Grows Up." Both stories gave me the creeps and needless to say, that's the type I like.

I like your Masters of Fantasy series very much also—it gives me the feeling of knowing a little more about our great fantasy authors of a few years ago. How about putting in some present day authors who are still living, for a change?

I intend to be on hand for the next issue of F.F.M. I've heard of; but never read "Before the Dawn" so I'm looking forward to another Taine story. 'Purple Sapphire" should really be good.

BOB STRICKLER.

6719 Chestnut,
Kansas City 5, Missouri.

"THE MESSENGER" A MASTERPIECE

I enjoyed "City of the Dead" very much, but Chambers' "The Messenger" took top honors with me.

Finlay's illustration on page 37 really captured my interest with page 71 a very close second. Everybody to their own opinion, but good art enhances a story immensely in my book.

"The Messenger" was a masterpiece in the scenic descriptive vein, but the plot was to say the least, rambling. However, let's have more Chambers, by all means; "In Search of the Unknown" for instance.

"City of the Dead" hit a mellow spot with an air of ageless magic, wending its way throughout. The ending however, struck no responsive chord, which to me is an absolute must for any great novel.

If this sees printer's ink, I would appreciate letters from any and all.

R. F. DOLAN.

4 Archie Street Rear,
Chicopee Falls, Mass.

THE READERS' VIEWPOINT

LIKED GRONER YARN

Just finished reading your April issue, and I think "City of the Dead" deserves to be labeled a classic. The short story was fairly good, too, but I particularly liked the pictures. Pat Lawrence and Finlay on the back—those boys are great.

There's one thing I'd like to get off my chest and that's my objection to the absurd prices some booksellers ask for old fantasy books and magazines.

The other day I noticed about a dozen very old issues of a fantasy magazine in a local book store. They were in extremely dilapidated condition, soiled and dirty and yet the dealer wanted a buck and a half apiece for them.

I will never pay $1.50 for a second hand book originally selling for fifteen cents.

I close, wishing you long life and prosperity.

RICHARD READER.

1000 West Sixth St.,
St. Paul, Minn.

THAT SURPRISING NOVEL

"The Devil's Spoon" was a big surprise. It held my interest throughout. Theodora Du Bois seems to have a style that is highly humorous. I pitied Haroot for several reasons and I laughed inwardly when he discovered the true identity of his "Grandma." The author certainly had him in a lot of embarrassing spots but it was to be expected; the condition that he was in. Thanks for publishing a surprising but interesting novel, anyway. London's short was greatly enjoyed. But the illustrations for the whole issue fell short. The best one was on page 21. The cover is the worst Finlay's done.

Mindful of Taine's "Purple Sapphire" scheduled for next issue, I hope it turns out to expectations. You need something to make up for the gap created by the drab "City of the Dead" you gave us in the April issue.

JAMES W. AYERS.

609 1st St.,
Attalla, Ala.

DELIGHTFUL FANTASY

I just had to sit down and pen this epistle to you.

Theodora Du Bois' "The Devil's Spoon" was one of the most delightful fantasies we've read in a long, long time.

Virgil Finlay's cover was up to the master's top work, and Neil Austin was superb in his illustration of H. G. Wells. (Why not let him do some regular interior illustrations for novels?)

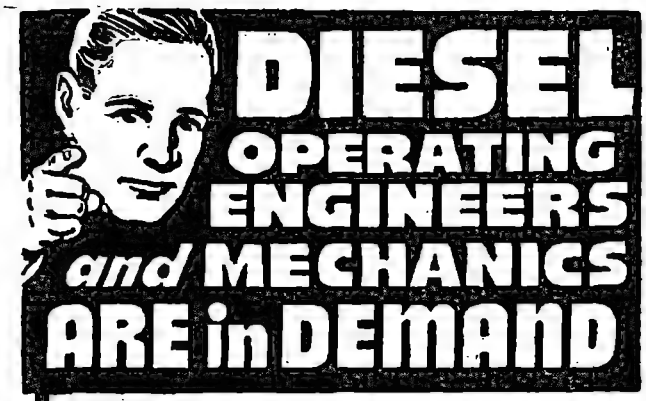
Your forecast of John Taine's "Purple Sapphire" in the August F.F.M. is long awaited news.

Now for the readers:

I have mint copies of "Marginalia" and "Lost Worlds" for sale.

Also used copies (1 each) of "Gladiator" and "The Murderer Invisible" by Philip Wylie.

Oh, yes, a mint (1) copy of Dec. '41 issue of



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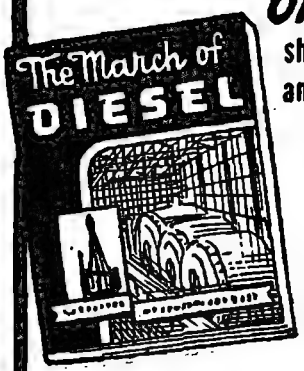

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Until the next issue, I'm your obedient reader.

MILTON REICH.

2139 Grand Ave.,
New York 53, N. Y.

NEEDS BOOKS

I am looking for the following books to help complete my collection: "The Terror" by Arthur Machen; "The Return" by de la Mare; "The Yellow Peril" by M. P. Shiel; "The Day of the Beast" by Zane Grey; "The Devil's Highway" by Harold Bell Wright and John Lebar.

Also non-fantasy items by Harold Bell Wright.

I have a good copy with d/w of "Zombee" which I will trade for a copy of "Lost Worlds" which must also be in good shape with d/w.

HERMAN KING.

Wolf Creek,
West Virginia.

SERVICE OFFERED

Have been a consistent reader of F.F.M. as well as other magazines of the macabre, startling, science fiction, etc, for years. Am temporarily unable to work and have a great deal of time at my disposal. Since this city has a great many book and magazine stores, I thought some of your readers would like to avail themselves of my leisure to purchase back copies of the various magazines I may be able to find. Usually the prices are the actual original price of the magazine. I will charge only five cents per copy over the prices charged me. Please remember that I am an amateur at this type of shopping. If all correspondents will write enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope, I shall be glad to forward, C.O.D. what I am able to find.

Every time I read a reader's column, (and that's the first thing I do) it makes me slightly uncomfortable to know that back issues of magazines which may be exactly what someone needs are gathering dust in some shop.

Please don't ask for issues too far in the past, just at first, until I get the hang of the thing.

FRANK A. P. MORGAN.

124 West Thirty-sixth St.,
Los Angeles, Calif.

GLAD TO SEE F.N. BACK

It has been some time since I wrote in to "our magazine", so here are a few impressions covering that last half dozen or so numbers. "The Devil's Spoon" in the June issue was a charming romance, but the fantasy element was rather slight and inconsequentially treated. It was a nice, well-written story, but seemed to me to be hardly a suitable choice for F.F.M.

I liked much better "City of the Dead" in the April issue. Here, although one might be tempted to question the author's basic idea of restoring impressions stored up in the surfaces

of objects, there is no denying that Groner turned out an interesting and fast moving story.

I note that the same basic idea was used by Taine in "Before the Dawn".

I won't comment on "The Peacemaker" as, unfortunately, my subscription renewal, which was due for the Feb. issue, arrived too late to secure it. However, I have hopes of picking up this number soon. At present it's the only one I'm short of, right back to No. 1.

"Man Who Went Back" in the Dec. issue was another story that did not impress me too greatly. The story seemed to be written in a rather tame style, lacking in brilliance. This, coupled with the fact that F.F.M. has given us a number of much better stories employing the same theme, rather tended to turn me off it.

The same remarks apply pretty well to "People of the Ruins." I had the greatest difficulty in sticking this story out to the finish, it was so dull.

These were more than compensated for, though, when you presented us with "Minimum Man". This was a refreshingly "different" story which contained all the essentials—fantasy background, story interest, deft handling, etc., and judging by the letters in subsequent issues, it went over well with the readers.

"City of Wonder" also struck me as being above the average. In spite of the handicap of a much used plot, the author gave us an excellent blending of romance, adventure and fantasy background. All in all, a worthwhile story.

The majority of the shorts in these issues were good. I rather thought, though, that Chambers' "The Messenger" placed a little more emphasis than was necessary on the "blood-curdling grisly horror" motif. It was rather overdone. Still, it was, no doubt, a suitable story with which to impress our forefathers of 50 years back.

Covers and illustrations are, as always, superb. There seems to be little left to ask for now we have got Finlay as well as Lawrence.

Was very pleased to see the return of *Fantastic Novels* and even more pleased to see that the old Munsey "Treasure House" of fantasy classics is now reopened for the benefit of your readers. I have already received the 1st of the new F. N. containing "Ship of Ishtar" as a result of the good offices of a friend "over there"—a fellow reader. I am looking forward to the publication of all those great stories that I have seen listed in Readers' Viewpoint.

Am also looking forward very much to the next F.F.M. which is scheduled to contain "Purple Sapphire". This is another "scoop" for which you deserve your readers' heartfelt congratulations.

Carry on with the good work.

TOM HUGHES.

15 Amberley Grove,
Witton,
Birmingham, England.

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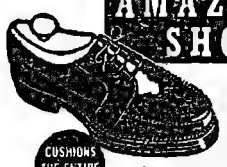

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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES WANTS MORE EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This letter is written mainly for one purpose; it is a plea, an entreaty, or call it what you will, to break the iron curtain which hangs over your letter column which is otherwise the best column in all the magazines of science fiction.

You are very grown-up in your attitude—which is unlike another magazine's—in that you allow names of magazines other than your own to apear. This alone makes your column good, for it has become the clearing house for fans in search or in disposal of magazines. You also present not only comments about the last issue, which can become very boring if not varied by other material, but requests for correspondence, for information, and you have made it sort of an announce-o-graph of events.

Your Readers' Viewpoint has all a fan could ask for but one thing, and it is that which brings me to write you. Incessantly fans have begged to have an editor's comment.

"There is not room in these columns to answer all readers' questions," you reply. I disagree, as do others who have already written in. You must find room. We know our illustrious editor only as a stony voice which occasionally breaks the silence to say a word. We do not know you as a personality—and this is possible. Even a small comment after a letter such as, "Thanks for the letter, Bob" or "We'll see what we can do, Jim", or such would make a world of difference.

Certainly that isn't asking too much, is it?

I hope I haven't been too crabby for I really think your magazine is wonderful!

KENNY PITCHFORD.

709 North 15th St.,
Moorhead, Minn.

Editor's Note: The editor feels really touched and will try to squeeze in a few words, now and then. Best wishes to you, Kenny.

NEEDS "ANCIENT ALLAN"

First the brick-bats: I was disgusted when I read "City of the Dead." I thought that the editors of F.F.M. had better respect for the reader than to foist on us such trash. It was nothing more than a third-rate adventure story. As it went on the plot kept thickening until I felt lost in its murk. The only excuse you had to put it in a magazine of F.F.M.'s caliber and scope was the very thin idea of Prof. Clusius' invention. If there had been more of Clusius and less of fights with Arabs and people in disguise it might have been a reasonable story.

Don't get me wrong. I like third-rate adventure stories. But there is so much available and it is so hard to get some of the old stfantasy classics that I don't look to F.F.M. for the blood-and-thunder.

And now for the bouquets: The cover for the April issue was one of the best I have ever seen. It is a pity that it was wasted on such a mediocre story. And Lawrence and Finlay are still tops with me for the inside.

THE READERS' VIEWPOINT

I know that I am a little late on these, but I got here after a long trip and, within the past week, read all the issues of F.F.M. and F.N. since December 1947.

I won't attempt to rate the stories. With the above exception they are all excellent. I was particularly pleased with "The Devil's Spoon" in the novels and with "Planet of Sand" and "Atlantis' Exile" as shorts.

On the whole I am pleased with F.F.M. and to prove it, here is my check for $1.50.

When I moved out to this neighborhood I lost some of my old F.F.M.'s. There is one which bothers me particularly, the one containing Haggard's "The Ancient Allan." Can some reader help me?

Anyhow, F.F.M. is one of the three magazines I keep permanently. I should have said four, but I think of F.F.M. and F.N. as a single magazine. After all, they come out only once a month between them.

My best to you,

MICHAEL J. KEENAN.

830½ Towner Ave.,
Albuquerque, N. Mex.

CONGRATULATIONS ON F.N.

This is the second letter I have ever written to any magazine. The first, some years ago, was to you, protesting your policy of dropping Munsey reprints. I believe I write for the inarticulate readers—who buy what they want and drop what they do not desire. And say nothing!

May I congratulate you for deciding to again reprint Munsey's stories in *F. Novels?*

When you come down to earth and start reprinting the multitude of first rate Munsey stories this noisy generation never heard of, you will gain the reward all editors strive for.

Lay off the straight fantasy—*Argosy* never went for it, anyway.

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I am saying nothing about illustrations. I buy the magazine to read the stories. I think any serious reader does the same.

I regret I cannot congratulate you on the stuff in *F. Mysteries* the past three years. A couple—maybe three, novels were worth reading. You reprinted H. G. Wells' poorest novel. Haggard's were appreciated. Nothing approached the earlier reprints. I have every issue, from Vol. I, No. 1.

At any rate you can see I am really interested, and will go along with you.

I have nothing to sell, and can afford to be honest.

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About the type of stories; I will not suggest what to print as you are going O.K. Then many of your readers express my view point perfectly. There is, however, one story I would like to mention titled "Etidorpha" (spell it backwards) or "To the Ends of the Earth." Being the account of a scientifically remarkable journey in the center of the earth, printed by Robert Clarke, Cincinnati in 1895.

Coming back to illustrations. About Lawrence; when he wants to he can outdo Finlay in scenery and beauty, cover as well as inside. For example the June issue page 61. It seems as though Finlay is staying away from his old style. What I call O.K. is as shown in *Fantastic Novels* May issue page 21 and 27.

About Paul, his is a style all his own. Can't you snare him in doing some work for you?

I believe I have stated enough if not too much.

I remain a loyal fan,

PELLEGRINO FALCO.

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Editor's Note: Frank R. Paul's drawings are appearing in some issues of our Fantastic Novels.

REQUEST

It would be greatly appreciated if your readers could be informed that I have the following books for sale: "The King in Yellow"—Chambers; "The Man Who Mastered Time"—Cummings; "The Island of Capt. Sparrow—Wright; "The Maracot Deep"—Doyle; "Morning Star"—Haggard.

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GERALD FENTON.

455 Wilbrod St.,
Ottawa, Ont., Canada.

THE READERS' VIEWPOINT

SUGGESTIONS

This is written for two reasons, first to try and ascertain the date and issues of the old *Popular Magazine* in which several stories appeared and secondly to urge you to reprint in F.N., now that you have resurrected it, these three stories. "The Lost Atlantide" by Fred MacIsaac, an Atlantis story (and a corker) of around 1928 or '29 in *Popular*. This is my number one request. Please, please look this one up and see what I mean. Second is "Morgo, The Mighty" all about some fantastic goings on in the Himalaya Mountains. As I remember, "Morgo" was a giant ant who befriended some lost humans.

The third story I do not recall the name of, but it was a short story (the other two were serial novels) and a cover story about some aliens who all unknown to earth men, from space ships away up, released an opaque gas high in the stratosphere which gradually cut down the sunlight we were receiving and the earth was becoming colder and colder till the plot to freeze us out was discovered and thwarted.

These three stories have stuck in my mind for twenty years or so and I would sure like to see them reprinted again.

I have over 2000 magazines of all the STF and fantasy types and hundreds of books, so I'm qualified to pick good stories, I think.

I would like to have some readers let me know about the story I cannot identify.

Yours with all best wishes.

JOHN E. HERZOG.

11 Pine St.,
Castle Shannon, Pa.

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I've been a reader of science fiction now for about a year and a half. However, to my regret I only recently discovered *Famous Fantastic Mysteries.*

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Your novel, "The Peacemaker" was pretty good, but I just couldn't seem to get interested. I hope that you'll soon start featuring more stories of space and time. Like all of your others fans, I hope that you'll soon go monthly.

I have a few paper bound editions of A. Merritt's stories which I'm willing to trade for some books that I need for my collection. Also, I have other fantasy books to trade.

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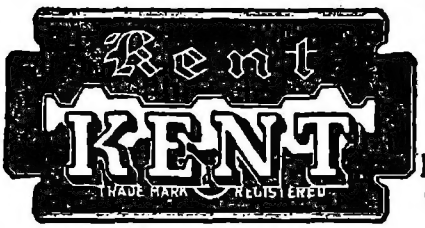

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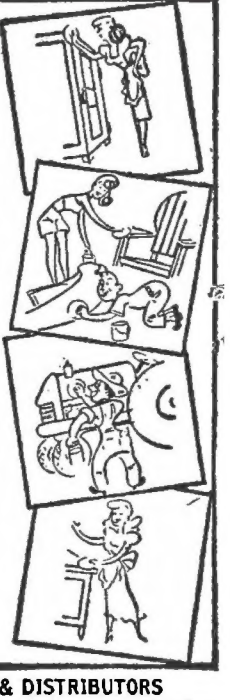

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